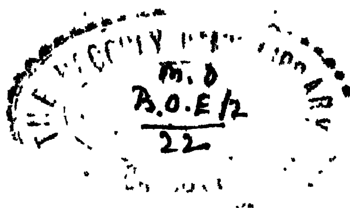


PRACTICALITY
HOW TO ACQUIRE IT

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FUNK & WAGNALLS COMPANY
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MENTAL EFFICIENCY SERIES

PRACTICALITY

HOW TO ACQUIRE IT

By R. NICOLLE

TRANSLATED BY FRANCIS MEDHURST, D.LITT.

AUTHORIZED EDITION

"The Practical Sense is an inexhaustible, wonder-working currency accepted everywhere."



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PREFACE

PRACTICALITY is the sense of seeing things as they are and of doing things as they ought to be done. Specifically, it is defined as the science of being skilled in the application of means to attain particular ends, especially in dealing with the common affairs of life. The Author of this book defines Practicality appropriately as "An inexhaustible wonder-working currency accepted everywhere." True Practicality is acquired through the exercise of good nature, patience, insight, and perspicacity, and by experience. It is the application of Tact to daily life; for tact captivates, fascinates, even anticipates, and by so doing lightens the burdens we have to bear and thus plays no unimportant part in the economy of life. In this work Practicality is presented as consisting of judgment, attention, perception, patience, perseverance, will, decision, finesse, and foresight. One may possess these qualities without knowing how to apply them—in this book the Author shows the Reader just how to do so to his advantage. He points out that the man who possesses foresight and the

ability to concentrate his mind; whose perception is keen and judgment sound; whose decision is firm; whose will is strength, and whose determination is power—*only he* who commands these qualities, and can apply them advantageously at the psychological moment, is Past Master of Practicality.

Self-control and self-reliance are the beginnings of practical wisdom. True strength springs from the mastery of self which, with self-reliance, equips and sustains us for the trials that life compels us to endure. But self is every one's own worst enemy. Therefore, he who would become a power in Practicality must first become master of himself. He must dominate self before he can hope to dominate others. To point out how to do this, and how to benefit thereby is another of the tasks undertaken by the Author.

The careful Reader will find in the following pages a rich mine of suggestion on the application of Practicality to daily life. He is warned against illusive Practicality, errors of foresight, and errors of judgment. He is told how he may become a Master of Practicality—study life, observe closely, keep an eye on detail, avoid waste, practise small economies, recognize the worth of

trifles and utilize them to their full value—and reap the benefits it affords. To the practical man the great highroad of human welfare is reached by the by-path of stedfastness. Life promises much but gives little; Work forces it to pay when Experience guides and Purpose is undeterred. But Life's current coin is struck in the mint of Experience with the one indelible word PRACTICALITY, and therefore, it is that "inexhaustible wonder-working currency accepted everywhere," which the Author considers it to be in the pages that follow.

THE PUBLISHERS.

CONTENTS

PART TWO

PRACTICALITY IN THE DAILY LIFE OF MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD

PART THREE

PRACTICALITY: HOW TO ACQUIRE IT

PART I

PRACTICALITY: ITS STOCK IN TRADE

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS PRACTICALITY?

Of What Element is this Veritable Science Composed?

PRACTICALITY is not a quality. It is a science. A natural science, in some instances; a magnificent gift with which chance has endowed its fortunate possessor. An acquired science, generally speaking, and one for which one pays dearly. Yet still a science that any one may acquire by working intelligently toward its conquest. A kitten is born into the world fully covered with a soft and handsome garment of fur, fully armed with claws and with teeth. It is able to eat at once; it can walk almost at once.

A baby is born into the world naked, blind, without teeth, without strength, a little, inert bundle of flesh that hardly knows enough to stir; that can only show that it is alive by crying; that does not know enough to eat; that has no notion how to walk.

The man who has been given the gift of Practicality is like the kitten. He is provided by nature with the quality that fits him for life. He is rich, strong, and happy.

The ordinary human being is like a baby. He is defenseless. It is only by dint of many efforts that he finds out how to protect himself, how to fight the battle of life. He has to wrest from existence the wealth, the strength, and the happiness with which the other man is endowed at birth.

Practicality can be innate.

It can also be acquired. It is frequently acquired. To possess practical sense is to be endowed with such qualities as:

Judgment.
Attention.
Perception.
Patience.
Perseverance.
Will.
Decision.
Finesse.
Foresight.

It is also the knowledge of how to avail oneself of these qualities at the psychological moment.

One can have all these qualities, however, without possessing the practical sense.

One can own a violin without being a musician. To be a true artist one must know exactly how to play upon this violin. This knowledge is what makes the virtuoso.

Artistry may be born in one or it may be acquired.

Practicality is essentially the art of knowing exactly how to use all the qualities enumerated above. Sometimes this art is born in one. Nearly always it is an art that one must acquire.

The motto of the man who possesses the practical sense will be:

"Nothing can disconcert me!"

"I am troubled by nothing!"

Nothing can disconcert him. In every situation in life he will be able to find a way out. The most disturbing situations, the most involved circumstances will have no terrors for him. He will find some means of turning all occurrences to his advantage.

He will be troubled by nothing. While he knows exactly what he needs to triumph over all obstacles, to arrive at his goal, he will also be aware of the things he must not do, of what

will be likely to hinder him. He can estimate qualities, faults, feelings, proclivities. He carries no baggage save that which is absolutely necessary.

When you are about to start on a railway journey, you may be amused by watching the crowd of persons that swarms on the platform before the departure of the train. Look it over carefully, for in it you will find pictured many of the different phases of life.

Here comes a woman who is red in the face, out of breath, in a great state of nervousness. She is laced into a most magnificent and stylish costume, and her head is adorned with a huge and expensive hat loaded down with ostrich plumes and ornaments of jet.

She stumbles over her train, which is too long, and trips on her heels, which are too high.

She is weighed down with all sorts of articles—an umbrella, a parasol, a hand-bag, a suit-case, cardboard boxes, small packages, magazines, and so forth.

The unfortunate woman is weak with hurrying, and in a fever heat. She bustles about, talking incessantly, like a tornado among the wondering, openly amused, and laughing crowds of passengers. Some travelers follow her, suit-

ably drest in befitting clothes, small satchels in their hands.

They arrive at the station smiling and at their ease. You say to yourself "That poor woman doesn't travel very often!" Let her beware. She is threatened with all sorts of misfortunes in the course of her journey. Her handsome and altogether too tight gown will cause her all kinds of annoyance. The smoke and dirt of travel will soil it. Long hours of sitting still in constrained positions will destroy its freshness. In this exaggerated toilet the unfortunate creature has the air of smothering, of suffering from cramp or from poor circulation.

If she doesn't soon remove that far too-heavy hat she will have a headache.

If she does take it off she will arrive with her hair in disorder, tumbling down, and a spectacle for ridicule.

And her feet, poor little feet, confined and imprisoned in those dainty but narrow shoes.

And all her baggage. Where is she to put it? Her fellow travelers on the train, overwhelmed by this flood of small articles, will naturally be incensed, and during the journey the poor woman will see all about her cold, annoyed, and averted looks.

Will she ever be able to find a seat that is comfortable?

This unfortunate traveler is a spectacle for amused pity.

Look back now a little in your own memories. Have you never undergone a similar experience?

Have you never taken a first journey in just such a wild, disordered, and poorly prepared fashion?

Nowadays you are a man or a woman who travels quietly, comfortably. You are as much at your ease as those men who came after the poor woman with her too-elegant clothes and her distressing lack of experience. Your dress is made expressly for traveling. You are in plainly tailored garments, of a gray shade, the color of dust and smoke. Your hair is done neatly but unpretentiously. Your hat can easily be taken off and put on again. You have a veil to protect your face from the wind, and easy, serviceable shoes. For baggage you carry nothing save the few necessaries that will save you from any discomfort in the possible event of a few hours' delay.

You are the sort of traveler who is good company. Not bothering other people and not bothered by them.

What has caused you to become so?

Habit. The making of many journeys. You have acquired the practical sense in relation to traveling.

Here is another example:

You wish to buy a dress. You are not a rich woman. You must pick and choose and show judgment. Your desire to look well must be governed to some extent by circumstances. The saleswoman lays out before you a beautiful dress of a light and silky material, at quite a reasonable figure. You look at the dress with pleasure, with longing. You draw it toward you and feel the quality of the goods with your fingers, then suddenly, with a sigh of realization, you let fall the fragile fabric with a determined "No!"

The saleswoman shows you a costume that is rich, charming, full of coquetry. You again murmur "No!" She next exhibits a velvet gown of a ravishing color and in the most fashionable style. It is with deep regret that you once more exclaim "No!"

The saleswoman is a bit at a loss. She looks about for something likely to catch the fancy of such a difficult customer. Now is the time that you suddenly come to her aid.

"These dresses are all very nice," you say. "The silk one is particularly handsome; it becomes me; but I am afraid that the sun and the rain would soon spoil it.

"The walking costume is very attractive, but it is made of material that will not last.

"The velvet is beautiful, but just a little too beautiful for my purpose."

And then you finish with this one little illuminating phrase, which will make everything clear to her:

"I want something that will be practical!"

The saleswoman who, a moment ago, was very much worried and disheartened, understands in an instant. "Something practical!" Nothing in the world can be simpler.

There are practical goods, styles, colors, prices—everything.

Here are a number of practical dresses. Make your choice!

A practical dress is one which, while strictly in the prevailing fashion, of becoming style, and of pleasing color, will be adapted to the exigencies of walking, of moving about easily, of doing your work, and that will not be injured by exposure to rain, to fresh air, to sunlight, or to the wear and tear of traveling.

Now why is it that you have picked this particular dress? Why is it that the saleswoman instantly understood what you wanted when you made that little illuminating remark of yours?

Experience, is the answer. An intimate acquaintance with the needs of the case.

When the poor woman of whom we were speaking a little while ago reaches the end of her journey, she will have acquired a little bit of practical sense. She will know enough next time not to embarrass herself with a useless load of baggage and unnecessary packages. She will wear a dress suited to the purpose in hand. She will have learned experience at the expense of some discomfort to herself.

All this, dear reader, is designed to make it plain to you that practical sense, this science that extracts from life everything that is likely to be useful, is chiefly acquired by experience. by making trial of things, by the lessons we learn by accident.

Outside of the innate practical sense, the native gift of being able to adapt circumstances to our own ends, there is nothing but Experience, the teacher that instils into our minds the art of being practical, of properly employing our qualities. The teacher, moreover, that gives us les-

sons in these same qualities, showing us where we are lacking in them and what we must do to acquire them.

One can become an adept in practicality even if one starts out by being absolutely devoid of every quality that leads to its acquisition.

Experience is the lesson we learn from affairs; it is the test that fate imposes upon us.

A hard lesson, often enough, and one only too frequently rewarded with sufficiently bitter fruit!

When you are making a long sea-voyage, while you are taking your daily constitutional up and down the deck, you happen to glance upward and see suspended above you, ranged in regular ranks, a long row of life-belts. You remark approvingly:

"A very practical idea, that!"

To how many melancholy tragedies do we owe that practical arrangement? How many poor bodies have sunk unburied to that end through the cold dusk of the ocean deeps? How many widows and orphans have paid for this experience with their tears?

Miners go down into a mine carrying the safety-lamp of Humphry Davy. You examine this lamp, perhaps, and you observe the presence

of the metallic screen about it that does not allow of the passage of a flame, and you exclaim:

"How practical it is!"

Why was a lamp of just this kind ever invented? Stop to think for an instant of the many terrible accidents that have been due to fire-damp and you will arrive at the solemn answer—"Experience."

When you travel on the subway you will notice that the lighting of the stations and of the tunnels is performed by a different system to that which provides the power.

When a short-circuit takes place the power on the stations is shut off, but the tunnel remains lighted and no panic occurs.

You are well aware that this has not always been the case. It is not with such a system as this that underground railways were first operated. In the early days the same current lighted the tunnels and the stations and supplied the motive-power for the trains.

Why was this changed? one might ask. Was it necessary? What made the company think of it?

Experience again! A bad accident, despair, horror, and death!

It seemed highly practical to have the light-

ing and the motive-power come from the one current. But it was something else. It was highly dangerous. Beware, above all, of a false appearance of practicality. Experience will one day make clear to you its hollowness. It will always be at your elbow to give you new conceptions, fresh ideas. It will be thanks to it that your native gifts will be largely improved. To recapitulate, then. The practical sense consists of a number of qualities, but above all of the art of utilizing these qualities.

This sense may be innate or acquired.

To acquire it one thing and one only is supremely necessary—Experience.

Experience becomes the source of all the qualities that are needed to develop the practical sense, and it also is the teacher that makes clear to us the art of utilizing these qualities to our own advantage.

Experience is the totality of the occurrences of our lives, which proves these things to us. It is as much needed by the man of innate practical sense as by the man who has to acquire his practicality.

Thanks to it the two become equals, and in some cases an acquired sense of practicality may even be superior to that which is innate.

CHAPTER II

EXPERIENCE

Whence Comes It?—Of What is It Composed? Perspicacity—Insight

How does experience come to us? Of what elements is this mighty goddess with a frowning brow composed?

Let us suppose that you go out into streets soaked with rain wearing a pair of light pumps. You very naturally get your feet wet. You go back into the house with dirty feet and soil your hardwood floors. Further than this, that night you begin to cough. You have caught cold.

Wet feet.

Dirty floors.

A bad cold.

If you happen to be preoccupied about something you will not notice that, your rooms have been soiled, you will not pay any attention to your cold.

Now a neighbor comes in to see you.

"Oh, what a dirty floor!" she exclaims. "Who has been in here with wet feet?

"Ahah! You are sneezing! So you were out in all that rain!"

By this time your attention is aroused.

"Why I am the one who dirtied the floor!

"I have caught cold!

"My feet were wet!"

Reflection. Then recollection.

There was needed an agent for these two mental processes.

Your neighbor. By what action has she succeeded in enlightening you? By arousing your attention.

If you had been paying attention yourself you would have noticed all these things at once and would have realized how they happened.

But is that the end of it?

When you have realized the circumstances, what will you do?

It is pouring again to-day. You are again wearing a pair of light slippers. It becomes necessary for you to go out. You suddenly halt on your way to the door. The rain is beating against the window-panes. You listen to it. Your eyes go down to your feet and from there to your polished floors. Pretty soon you will be

hunting for a pair of stout shoes. When you come home after your outing you will wipe your feet carefully on the door-mat. When you walk across it after this your floor will remain as polished and as spotless as before.

Why did you not do to-day what you did yesterday?

Why have you changed your tactics so suddenly?

Experience, of course.

How is experience gained?

Let us make together a little analysis of how this change in your ideas was brought about.

You have performed certain actions. It was the cause of certain occurrences, produced, in fact, a certain result.

If you remember nothing either of the act or of its consequences, your mind will be a blank on the subject. If you remember the act and have no recollection of the consequences, the same thing will be true.

In order to come to a proper conclusion you must have perfect recollection of the circumstances.

To realize how the result was produced, you must have, before you remember it, a condition of mental attention, which will take shape in your mind in the form of a conclusion.

Here, then, is the first form of experience, which is composed of:

The memory of an act.

Attention to the results of this act.

Conclusions drawn from these results.

A second form of experience is—to form a definite judgment and to recognize that the action performed has led inevitably to the result produced.

Now let us see how these two forms of experience may be applied for our profit.

A similar situation presents itself. Something of the same sort has to be done.

Now is the time to remember your previous action and what resulted therefrom, and to determine in your own mind whether the results were advantageous or disadvantageous to you. On these results you will be called upon to judge for yourself whether to act in the present case, as you did in the past, or to do something quite different.

To put it in another way, experience is composed of two phases:

First phase: the act and its consequences.

Second phase: the second act.

In these two phases the following mental processes are involved:

First Phase

Act. Consequences or results.	Attention. Reflection. Attention.	Relation of the act to its consequences or its results.

Second Phase

Future act.	Memory.	The previous act and its result. Judgment. Final decision.

The main bond between the two phases is that of *memory.*

The decision which becomes the new factor in the case is the result of experience.

Just now, when you are about to go out, you went through every step of the second phase. Let us reenact this in order to make the matter absolutely clear.

Future Act		*Past Action*
I have to go out. It is raining hard.	Memory	It rained yesterday. I went out without thick shoes on.

Result	*Judgment*	*Decision*
I got wet. I dirtied the floor. I caught cold.	It was a foolish thing to do.	I will put on my heavy boots.

The practical sense, as above exhibited, is made up of experience plus decision.

Experience is, in one word, *memory.*

Is it only one's personal experience that counts in these cases?

By no means. We do not need to experience things ourselves to force judgments regarding them. We can just as easily take into account the experiences of other people and draw from them a reasonable conclusion, that is to say, adopt a happy mean.

Example:

You are in the habit of lighting your fire of a morning with kerosene. No harm has ever come to you from this practise. Your neighbor also lights his fire with kerosene, and nothing unpleasant has ever happened to him.

A friend of yours lights his fire with kerosene and just escapes burning himself badly.

A stranger lit his fire with kerosene and was burned to death.

A certain heating company makes a specialty of manufacturing small briquettes of solidified kerosene.

Here you have five persons, five similar acts, five experiences.

First. Your own conclusion leads you to believe that the practise is without danger and quite helpful.

Second. The experience of your neighbor is that it is without danger and also helpful.

Third. Your friend's experience is that it

may be helpful, but may be also quite dangerous.

Fourth. The experience of the stranger shows that while possibly helpful it is very dangerous, indeed.

Fifth. The experience of the company shows that it is not at all dangerous when one knows how to prepare it, and is, moreover, most useful.

The company has, by a large number of experiences, of its own and of strangers, formed a judgment on the subject that is reasonable and based on the laws of averages. The company's practical sense has drawn the logical conclusions and has succeeded in making a useful product by proper handling of that which was highly dangerous.

In everything in life you will find these two opposites linked together—utility and danger.

The danger and the utility will both be proved to you by experience. By the attention you give to exterior matters you will discover for yourself just to what extent this double quality exists in things, and your practical sense, which is based on judgment, will always show you the way to harmonize this opposing duality.

Your experience, your attention, your personal qualities, in connection with the trials that have been made by others, will give rise in you

to the habit of drawing deductions, of recognizing what the consequences of an action are likely to be. This amounts to foresight.

Thus you will become entitled to a new qualification. You will be known as a man of perspicacity.

CHAPTER III

THE STOCK-IN-TRADE OF THE PRACTICAL MAN—HIS DEVICES

Patience and Good-Nature—Superficial Generosity—Intelligent Confidence and Intelligent Distrust—Knowledge of the Direction in Which One's Interest Lies

When a man has acquired experience by remembering his acts and their consequences and by the example provided all about him by the actions of other people and the results of these; when he has acquired the habit of judging, of estimating, of being able to foretell what results such and such an action is likely to bring about, he is far along the road toward acquiring practical sense.

He still needs a certain thing, however.

The ability to put into practise the knowledge and perspicacity he has acquired from experience.

To acquire this art of applying his experience he will require certain particular qualities and methods.

He will have to develop certain means.

Every one has his temperament. In order to succeed, in order to triumph over circumstances, one often has to bring into subjection and to transform one's temperament. If this seems at first sight impossible, one must at least do one's best in that direction, putting one's trust in chance for the rest.

One must learn to conceal one's feelings. The practical man can always do this when it becomes necessary. He will know how to hide his emotions and how to show them when it may be of assistance to him.

He will, in turn, be kind, confident, patient, credulous, blind, when he judges it to be necessary. In the same way he will be hard, defiant, or dissatisfied in conformity with the occasion, the business in hand, the people engaged upon it, the events that take place, or the situations involved.

All these methods that he must acquire, joined to his experience and his judgment, will be his stock-in-trade for achieving success.

What is meant by stock-in-trade?

It is a common enough word in the language. It represents, perhaps, better than any other metaphor, the idea of being prepared to act and to succeed.

A man who has the right practical sense pays a great deal of attention to his stock-in-trade. It is the foundation of every structure that he rears.

It consists of methods based upon the most careful study, of a refined and profound knowledge of men and of affairs. Methods, moreover, that are his private and particular property, known to him alone, and that he does not reveal even to his most intimate friends. These devices are many. There is the simple one and there are complex ones. There is the common one which depends solely upon the way it is applied for its success. Whatever it may be, such a device is always intelligent. It is born of self-mastery, of a knowledge of life, of will-power, and of persuasive force.

Would you care to read of some examples of devices, verging a little, perhaps, on trickery, but none the less affording a good illustration of how concealment of the feelings is carried out?

James has an old cousin, who is very wealthy,

besides being crotchety, full of whims, and a trifle miserly.

Every evening James goes to call on the old fellow, and spends some hours with him as his only guest. They play lotto and dominoes together. James makes a point of losing as much as he can afford. The old man chuckles and calls his unlucky cousin all sorts of ill-sounding names.

We can not but admire James, and his really angelic patience and generosity.

The old man finally falls ill. James takes up his residence with him in order to watch over him as a son watches over his father. He sleeps in the same room, awakens at the slightest sound, overwhelms the old man with every sort of kindness.

The old grumbler, in a continual bad temper, never ceases indulging in complaints and reproaches. James continues to endure them stoically, smiling and affectionate.

In order not to cause the old miser too much pain in his most tender spot, James undertakes to pay for the medicines and the food, and looks after the household expenses, loudly lamenting their number to the housekeeper, and insisting in the hearing of his cousin, that they are altogether too high.

When alone with the woman, he tips her handsomely, to keep her regard and her confidence. James is a model, in fact, of disinterestedness, patience, and goodness.

Nevertheless, when he reaches the doorstep of the house, where no one can observe him, he emits a "phew!" of relief.

What is the result? The cousin keeps getting worse and worse, and, finally, sends the housekeeper in search of his lawyer. She, being thoroughly devoted to James, stops on the way and tells him of her errand.

James runs to his cousin, and arrives just ahead of the lawyer to receive the last instructions of the dying man, who leaves him everything.

We must take off our hats to James! He certainly deserves nothing less. Before he took all these pains, he made a most careful study of his relative. By this means he found out all the breaches through which to climb into the citadel of the old man's dried-up heart. By sheer force of patience he arrived at his goal, he achieved success. He worked all along for this one result.

Of what use would have been his kindness, his patience, his generosity, and all the rest, if

his cousin had been a poor man? James in this case would have been virtuous, indeed, but his time would have been wasted.

To waste one's efforts is in no sense to be practical. Every moment of life should be employed in some useful way.

Let us consider another example of patience, generosity, and adroit good-fellowship; all valuable means of concealment.

James is one day introduced to the manager of a certain theater. This man offers him a couple of tickets, which James accepts, and finds they call for very good seats. He takes occasion to ask the manager for some more, and, his request being amiably granted, he finds that he has been presented with a whole box for the season.

James is quite astonished at such kindness. He sends a number of his friends to the theater, and all of them are given fine seats, in good parts of the house, and treated with every courtesy.

James begins to believe that this poor theatrical manager is a monomaniac on the subject of his friends. After a while the man regularly attaches himself to James, heaps attentions upon him, invites him to dinner, and entertains him

so much and so well that after a couple of months they have become bosom friends.

The younger man, having everything to gain, allows himself to be led along without resistance.

The manager has a charming but dowerless daughter.

No hint is given that her parents wish her to marry, altho the father knows all about James's snug little fortune. To make such a mistake would be to place two good friends in a false position.

In a very natural way the two young people soon become good comrades.

The family has become, in a sense, the family of James. He is at home with them. They are attached to him, as he is a sincere friend and an agreeable companion.

They take little trips together. The friendship grows closer and closer.

The young lady begins to show signs of dreaminess and melancholy. James is quite worried about her, and never dreams, egoist! that they are trying to entangle him in a marriage. "Why not," muses the gentle James, "stay good friends. . . . After all, I am not the one she cares for!"

The object of her affections appears to be a commonplace cousin from the country, homely, awkward, without refinement.

Well, he is just one friend more! James goes out with the practically engaged couple. The girl is very bewitching in her light summer dresses, her cheeks suffused with maiden blushes, and her eyes liquid with tenderness. She ignores James a trifle and devotes herself to her cousin, whole-heartedly and naturally.

She takes the lout by the arm, talks to him affectionately, teases him lovingly, and follows him about with a yearning and devoted gaze.

Now it is James's turn to become awkward, ill at ease, and unhappy.

At this stage the cousin returns home for some months. His vacation is over, and the regular life of the family begins once more.

James is glad to be alone again in the friendly parlor, at the piano, in his favorite arm-chair.

His little comrade, also, is much nicer to him in the absence of the red-faced and awkward cousin, who he has grown to detest.

Now what does James do, while his comrade embroiders quietly in front of a pleasant fire? He sits and dreams.

The young lady raises her head, looks over at

him, and smiles meaningly, a look of triumph flashing across her face.

James looks over at her in his turn. She works away at her embroidery, and dreams as she works. She is dreaming, doubtless, of that wretched cousin, with his red face and his awkward ways.

James comes near to choking. He feels a heavy weight pressing down upon his heart.

"Irene!"

This is the name of his little comrade.

"Yes! James."

"Are you thinking of that country bumpkin?"

She makes a start of indignation (joyous surprize).

"James! How can you——?"

Her voice is as sweet as honey. She begins to sob.

The young man loses his head completely, throws himself on his knees before her, and tries to comfort her.

At this moment his friend, the manager, enters the room.

Indignant surprize ensues, with a perfectly acted fit of hysterics on the part of the young lady.

The embarrassed James endeavors to explain.

The result is a marriage.

Moral. Some days after the wedding the manager and his daughter happen to be alone in a little room where they can not be overheard.

The daughter: "Well, it went off all right!"

The manager: "Am I, or am I not, a practical man? With a few tickets, a dinner or two, a few trips to the country, and cousin Paul's vacation expenses—not a great sum when considered as a whole—I have succeeded in getting for you a millionaire and a good husband to boot."

The daughter: "Yes, my dear father! But suppose you had failed? I, who love James, would have been very unhappy!"

The manager: "All experience, my dear. Foresight is what did it! I studied my man. I always look for the weak point in a person's armor!"

He will be by no means unhappy, will James. He will have a father-in-law who is most friendly, and a charming wife. These clever people will, doubtless, be of the greatest assistance to him all through life, since they possess in a marked degree the practical sense.

This clear-sighted father had discovered in James a good fellow who possest, what no

sensible man will ever disdain, a snug little fortune, and he offered him his friendship. As James was a little bit difficult to lead to the required point, and as these adroit people had to make use of the means at their disposal, they could only do their best with what they had. The means were not in any sense dishonest, and they succeeded. So much the better for them!

From a practical point of view, all means are good. They are never dishonest, for the reason that to be dishonest is to place oneself in a false position, to forge weapons that one's enemies can use against one.

The man who wishes to succeed in life should, therefore, call to his aid his intelligence, his adroitness, but never any underhand means.

The practical man should always have the road free and clear before him. He will not be adroit if he employs methods that may one day bar the way for him. All his resources must be utilized for his advancement—address, perspicuity, will-power. He must avoid even the appearance of evil as a dangerous stumbling-block. His success must be made not only temporary but permanent.

The practical man must be trustful where occasion demands it. He may even appear credu-

lous. The mask he wears depends upon the men with whom he has to do.

The banker X—— was one day visited at his office by a client, a stranger of brilliant parts, adroit, of great intelligence and of great courage, an indefatigable and forceful fighter.

The stranger came to the point at once. He said with great earnestness to X——:

"I need fifty thousand francs. I haven't a sou. The opportunity is a splendid one. Will you go into it?"

X—— saw the qualities of the man. He saw, too, that he was to be trusted. He answered simply:

"Yes! You may have the fifty thousand francs. I will draw up an acknowledgment for you to sign."

He took a piece of paper and wrote on it:

"I acknowledge that I owe to Mr. X—— the sum of fifty thousand francs, lent to me by him on the —— for the purpose of controlling the business of ——."

That was all.

The stranger signed his name and went about his business.

The banker had the appearance of rashness in the matter. It is true that he had sized up

his man, but he was more than disinterested to demand no share in a deal for which he furnished all the funds.

A year passed without news of any kind. X—— got a little worried, no doubt, but he never said a word, never wrote a line, leaving his debtor absolutely alone.

At the end of two years the stranger walked in one morning and said to the banker:

"I have succeeded! Here is your money!"

"Did you mention my name in the affair?"

"Never once. I alone was interested. To speak of you would have been to do myself a serious injury. Here is the exact amount. How much interest would you like? Give me the note as quickly as you can. I am prest for time!"

"You keep the money," said the banker. "I'll keep the note. We will consider this as a mutual present to each other. Are you willing?"

These two strong battlers with life looked at each other a moment and understood each other.

At his leisure the next day the banker had drawn up at his office a deed of partnership in due form. Leisurely he pushed toward the stranger the fifty thousand francs.

"Keep them," he said. "They will be of good use to us."

Conquered by his trust, the stranger took back the money and signed the contract that made the banker his partner.

Then, in the same calm and impassioned manner, the banker tore up the note.

This was an act of cleverness and sound judgment.

An initial piece of generosity intelligently reasoned out, with careful consideration; clear insight into the possibilities of the future; patience and confidence; a firm kindliness; a persuasive authority; the mask of trustfulness and good-fellowship.

This banker, who may seem to you foolhardy, was a man of a thousand. The little scrap of paper was, for him, when dealing with such a man as the stranger, an invaluable safeguard. This piece of paper was a perfect protection for him. Into his soul had stolen some suggestions of doubt, some hints of fear, but he drove them away. They were bad counselors, unfortunate advisers. He followed his original method all the way through the affair, and he did right.

To risk a partnership at the very start would have been a dangerous proceeding. The stran-

ger, dissatisfied, or at the least not under such an absolute need of fighting for himself, might not have succeeded so well. To irritate him while the affair was in progress would have been to make him distrustful, to put him on his guard against X——.

But when everything was successfully accomplished, to show him finally an open heart, and to say, "I want my share of what you have been able to make thanks to my money!" That was adroit, and also no more than common justice. The man could not refuse, and X——, knowing the character of his client, foresaw that there would be no unfortunate results, and that everything would go off splendidly. This, taken altogether, was the height of practical common sense.

To avoid the making of enemies, to irritate people as little as possible, to use all one's powers of persuasion—this is the rule dictated by the practical sense.

But if there is a trust which indicates adroitness, there is also a distrust which is equally adroit.

X—— knew very well that his debtor could easily take the astute means of returning him the sum intact, with the accumulated interest, and could thus emerge from the affair unhurt and triumphant.

But when we take another look at X——, our banker friend, we find him balancing adroit confidence, at the start, against adroit distrust.

He recognized one quality in his client—pride. This was the only weak point in the man that X—— could discover, and it was this quality that he was clever enough to have in mind when he made out the note. Given this man's pride in himself, the note was a solid protection. X—— held his man in the hollow of his hand, as he could at any time have made use of the note to destroy the reputation of the stranger.

The practical man should always look for the vulnerable point in his adversary's armor. It is often this one point that will enable him to triumph over the most seemingly insuperable obstacles.

To have the practical sense is to know how to inform oneself about things, how to make use of even the slightest trifle, of the smallest remark, of the least little action. It is to study life and men with attention, with judgment, with calmness, and with patience.

The practical sense is something quite outside of the virtues. There are virtues, indeed, which hinder one's progress.

Without doing some damage, without hurting

some one else, the practical man will never arrive at his goal. He will cultivate only those qualities that will aid him personally. He is the traveler who is accustomed to traveling. He does not load himself down on the journey of life with anything but the most necessary baggage.

His method of progress is to go straight ahead. He carries no luggage but directness. Foolish susceptibilities, pride, self-love, over-sensitiveness, chivalrous generosity, and dependence upon others are all hindrances with which he has nothing to do, altho he may occasionally make use of them in his own interests. He is determined to succeed, he has the natural desire to make his enterprises turn out for the best.

He is considerate and generous when it pays him to be so. He is also keenly alive to the contest that is going on all about him, and knows when these qualities are likely to harm him.

He is a willing and tireless worker. He never lacks courage.

He is the type of man who is absolutely frank with himself. The fundamental law of practical common sense is to know one's own qualities absolutely, so as to be able to disguise them when necessary.

"Learn to know yourself, that you may know, may understand, and may conquer others in the rough and tumble of the battle for existence."

"Your first enemy is by far the most dangerous—yourself! Learn to control yourself."

In order to acquire experience examine attentively the reasons for what happens with every passing moment.

PART II

PRACTICALITY IN THE DAILY LIFE OF MAN, WOMAN, AND CHILD

CHAPTER I

THE FALSE PRACTICAL SENSE—ERRORS IN FORESIGHT

The practical sense, as we have already pointed out, to be perfect, to be able to succeed, and to gain its ends exactly, must not allow itself to be encumbered with any useless sentiment or foolish weakness.

It frequently happens that one sees a man who is exceptionally clever, who is well versed in matters of business, and who has had a very wide experience, making errors of foresight and thus sustaining a setback. In looking back in memory over the facts of the case you will find it difficult to understand how such a man could make such a mistake. You feel that, in his place, with his talents and his wide experience, you would have acted quite differently. His failure seems to you quite inexplicable. You are almost inclined to believe in a miracle that has defeated him, some deep-laid plot that has betrayed him.

But you are quite wrong. Make no mistake!

This man, who is apparently so practical, has no excuse. His practical sense was at fault. He tried to carry out the enterprise while yielding to his weaknesses, being swayed by his sentiments, grasping at his interests, in a situation in which a real practical sense would be prepared to make sacrifice of all these, and to cast off the yoke that impeded his efforts.

For instance, here is the case of a man who has a large business deal to put through in Algeria, an enterprise which will permit of his making a fortune in a very short time. It is necessary for him to go at once to Africa, and vitally important that no hint of the affair slips out, since once it is known, the business will be much less profitable.

He makes up his mind to go and to keep his destination a secret.

He is married. His wife is a very pretty woman, but a trifle frivolous. She is the cause of some little anxiety to her husband.

He feels a good deal of misgiving at the idea of leaving her alone during a prolonged absence. He conceives the idea of providing her with a chaperon.

But who shall it be? Thinking over his various friends and relatives he can hit upon but

one person he believes to be absolutely trustworthy—his mother-in-law. Now he hates his mother-in-law. To see her installed in his home, to seek an interview with her, to have to beg her to do him this service—all this goes very much against the grain. But what else can he do?

But he is a man of practical sense. He can smile in the teeth of fate, can send an affectionate invitation to his mother-in-law to come and spend a few days with her children. He can load her with attentions. He can be patient and diplomatic.

The chaperon once safely installed, and knowing his wife to be thoroughly well guarded, he can, with a tranquil heart and a mind at ease, go off on his journey to make a fortune, knowing that the secret is hidden from everybody.

Or again, if the idea of getting a chaperon does not work out well, he must throw distrust to the winds, and leave his wife alone. Worse still, he must sacrifice to that end his pride, his jealousy, his masterful authority.

All these ideas pass through this man's mind. What can he do?

He says to himself: "Well, why not? Why shouldn't I take my wife along with me? It is much more practical!"

Then there will be no mother-in-law to flatter very much against his will, no reprisal to risk, and no subsequent worries. With his wife beside him, he can be tranquil, content, absolutely light-hearted.

So said, so done. The gentleman summons his wife, and asks for her silence. She promises to be absolutely discreet.

They go off gaily, joyfully, full of hope and of rosy visions for the future.

They arrive in Algeria. The husband installs his wife at a hotel, and hurries to his place of business. He finds his agent in a great state of mind, half buried under a pile of telegrams. The whole affair has been made public. But how? There is the mystery. All the value of the combination has vanished. The voyage has been a waste of time.

What has taken place?

The two men look at each other, stupefied with surprize. Suddenly the husband of the charming wife grows pale. A thought clear as a flash of lightning has darted across his mind.

He has made a fool of himself! He has thought of everything, weighed every chance. He has balanced and compared his feelings, setting one against the other. He has forgotten one

thing—the one vital thing—the woman's love of gossip. On this extremely delicate question he has hardly wasted a moment's reflection, and it is just this tiny mistake that has brought his whole house of cards about his ears.

Love of self and jealousy have blinded this man who considered himself so eminently practical, and he has made a grave mistake in foresight in telling his wife his secret in order to make her his ally.

He will never make the mistake again; rest assured of that! He is cured of that propensity, but the experience has been an exceedingly disagreeable one for him. He has preferred his own personal safety to the success of his business venture. He has wished to be absolutely easy in his mind about his wife, and has himself thus opened the tiny crack which has let in the flood and destroyed all his hopes.

You, in his place, under similar circumstances, might perhaps have thought at once of the one great asset in the matter—the secret—and would not have embarrassed yourself on the journey with any other luggage.

Other examples:

When a certain subway was built, the engineers said to themselves:

"A single current will provide us with both light and power. It is entirely practical. We can thus obtain economies in operating expenses, can get along with a smaller installation, and reduce the number of employees. Everything can be worked with the one plant!"

Their idea was to do a little bit better than had been done before.

Then came an accident. Death taught them the hard lesson of experience. What useless economy had been theirs, what criminal avarice, what foolish self-confidence!

A mistake, a grave error in foresight, was committed here. The main point was completely missed, lost sight of, through their incapacity.

Take the case of the cutting down of the great American forests. These vast areas covered with gigantic trees constituted a mine of unexploited wealth. So thought the practical Yankees, and so they set themselves to cutting down more and more forests and smiled with pride when they saw the long array of trains and boats laden with timber. Saw-mills multiplied in the land, and immense fortunes were built up.

The Yankees rejoiced greatly thereat, and rubbed their hands in glee. They like money,

do the Americans; it is their darling sin, and they made a great deal of money in this way. They became fabulously rich.

When the forests had finally vanished, the Americans, buried in their cavernous arm-chairs, their toes to the fire, expensive cigars in their mouths, lapped in luxury in their splendid homes, suddenly awoke to something.

Spring, which had been in the habit of smiling upon them at a certain date every year, delayed its arrival, and when it appeared did so in a sickly guise, cold, and rainy. Summer acted in the same unpleasant fashion. The winters became damp and warm. The crops died, devoured by blight. Hitherto unknown diseases decimated the population. Terrific storms disturbed the air.

The Americans said to themselves: "It is the revenge of the forests we have destroyed!"

The wise ones understood and planted new trees. And as the forests sprang up once more, peace returned to the land.

This was an error in foresight on the part of the Yankees. The great forests mitigated the rigors of the wind, made the air pure and healthy, and kept the weather equable.

The success here was fleeting. The little fail-

ing of love of money was gratified. It alone had caused this blindness, had prevented them from seeing all the miseries they were bringing on themselves.

Experience, the mother of wisdom, had once again in this case showed her calm but rugged face.

When a doctor is called in to see a sick person he diagnoses the disease, he sees what must be done.

It happens very often that he has to be governed by circumstances and to make a sacrifice to such or such an exigency of the illness. One sole thing is his aim—to cure the sick man. Must he then study to relieve the suffering, to give the patient rest and sleep, to keep down the fears or the grief of the relatives?

All these things must be beside the question, must be disregarded. He must pay no attention to them.

The sick man must undergo an operation. This operation is imperatively necessary, but the anesthetic may be the cause of death. The doctor goes straight to his end and performs the operation without an anesthetic. It is better to suffer than to die.

The man with the practical sense must be of

one mind with the doctor in this case. His motto must be: "Succeed." He must not allow himself to be turned aside by anything, and must throw on the scrap-heap every one of his personal feelings that interferes with this object.

He must be far-seeing, adroit, prudent. He will find it all in vain to be capable of impartial judgment, of making prompt and wise decisions, to have unlimited patience, dogged determination, and a powerful will, to possess, in fact, all the qualities that should make him absolutely practical, if he does not possess also breadth of mind, mental balance, and an enlightened viewpoint as to things in general and regarding himself in particular. These qualities will not serve him unless united. A day will come when a harsh experience will show him that he is after all only weak and ignorant and that he has been bearing on his back a bundle of useless burdens which now block the way for him.

The false practical sense is this quality when rendered blind, warped, and misled. It can worry along for some time, without an accident, as long as it is not put to the proof, and will become very sure of itself and believe that it is the real thing and a tower of strength. But a day

will come when the slender prop is broken and its innate weakness is seen of all men.

To avoid falling into this error, this self-deception that emanates from ourselves, what must be done?

We must learn to know ourselves, we must get to understand life, to know what may be the results of this chance or that. We must be prudent and far-seeing.

What does a good chauffeur do before he takes his car on a trip?

He looks it over carefully. He gives it a trial spin, studies it, considers it attentively, with method and with patience. He goes over the road, makes a mental note of the conditions of the country, the obstacles to be met with, and so forth.

Then, perfectly sure of himself and master of his car, he starts along the road that is already familiar to him and that he lights up with care. Nothing unfortunate happens to him. The journey is an agreeable and satisfactory one.

What would you say of this chauffeur if he looked over the road and lit it up, and yet disregarded the defects of his car? The journey might be performed in safety, but there would be a great probability of an accident.

The same result might occur if the driver were quite sure of his machine, but went out in the dark along an unknown road.

In both these cases the same factor of success is missing. There would be an error in foresight, a failure to make the necessary preparations.

Never allow yourself to be led away by a false practical sense. Never get into the grip of falsehood and self-deception. See clearly. Set your gaze rigidly upon your goal. Acquaint yourself with the road, fling aside all obstacles that may hinder you. Make for yourself a rampart and defense of everything that you can possibly use. Never allow yourself to be turned aside by useless and mischievous personal considerations. Be absolutely adamant to your own weaknesses, and you will be fitted for a genuine and complete success.

CHAPTER II

THE PRACTICAL SENSE IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE

The struggle for life. This is by no means merely a sounding-phrase, empty, and devoid of truth.

The immediate end of existence is suffering; to be alive is to be unhappy. The misery of the world is in no sense an accidental or an ephemeral thing. It is part of the scheme of life.

Every living thing fights against grief, to achieve *the conquest of it. This is the struggle* for life. It is the search for possible compensations. It is the search for the good that may offset the ills from which we suffer.

The greatest evil from which all civilized men suffer is the lack of money. The struggle for life has thus become a synonym for the struggle for money, the battle for wealth, because with money, with wealth, one has everything that is needed to do away with the sadness of life.

With money one has all possible help, all for-

getfulness, all joy, all beauty. With it one can experience every feeling, every delight, or at least, if one does not actually experience them, one can comfort oneself with a very fair imitation of them.

Life is the source of every kind of suffering.

Money is the one great means of fighting against this suffering.

Do not let us ever utter, ever repeat that absurd epigram: "Money does not make happiness!"

What, then, is happiness? What is it if it is not the ability to have the things of which one stands in need? How can we procure these things? With money, surely, or with something that has a value that can be measured in money.

What constitutes happiness for the man who is hungry? The ability to eat! How can one satisfy this need without it? How can one be cured of a disease if one has not the money to pay for care, for a doctor, for consultations, for medicines?

What constitutes happiness for the man who is utterly weary? Repose.

But how can he rest if he does not earn enough to enable him to exist during the time that he stops working?

He can have, of course, what other people will give him in the way of charity. But ought one to count upon this?

No, one should not! To live one must have money!

The working to acquire it, that is the struggle for existence, that is the battle for life.

We have already decided that the practical sense is the ability to utilize circumstances to our own advantage. The practical sense will exhibit itself in the struggle for life by making capital out of everything, by turning into cash every occasion in which it is at all possible to make any money.

The battle will be fierce, bitterly contested, without quarter, fought out to a finish. The combatants are innumerable, and every one of your adversaries will have trenchant and concealed weapons. The goal to be attained is the same for all, and the places for the victors are few.

Success! This magic word should illuminate your path, but you must not let it dazzle you with its rays. It should give you strength, but must not drive you along at too headlong a gait.

The practical sense in the struggle for life must consist of intelligence, prudence, concealment.

Never let any one fathom your practical sense. It is a weapon that you must hide unless you wish others to make an exact duplicate of it, which will render them redoubtable opponents, if not actually your superiors.

Do not become conceited. Do not think yourself so wonderfully strong.

Do not become fearful either, timid, hesitating, or weak. Be firm; cultivate the courage that is needful.

Be sure to know yourself as thoroughly as possible. Be absolutely sincere with yourself. This will be your finest means of defense, your most reliable aid.

Learn to know others no less perfectly. By so doing you can go forward in safety without having to fear any pitfalls or dangerous surprizes.

Do not be yielding. Be strong.

Estimate exactly what your resources amount to, and learn by your observations of life what resources are most fitted for your purpose.

The dominant thought in the brain of every human being is the thought of how to make his existence secure. This necessity takes a thousand shapes, dons a thousand disguises. You must learn how to recognize every one of these

shapes, how to penetrate every one of these disguises.

It is a hard task, abounding in troubles and disappointments of all sorts, and many such grow weary under the struggle.

They allow themselves to be swept, unresisting straws, along the stream of chance. They cease to struggle. At first they feel pride in their task. Then comes the revolt against fate. Then rage, then despair, then discouragement, lassitude, disgust, indifference.

They give place to others who are stronger and perhaps better armed. They become the wounded and the dying on the battle-field of the struggle for life.

Shall we cite you a few examples, spectacular, convincing, saddening?

Branly discovered the principle of wireless telegraphy. He was poor and obscure. The idea of the struggle for existence filled him with terror. He discovered the principle, but he went no further. This golden opportunity that might have been his he dared not make use of. He was timid, he was over-modest. A soldier without a weapon on a sanguinary battle-field; a soldier to whom a weapon found by chance seemed too heavy, too dangerous to use.

Branly remains in obscurity and poverty, his name scarcely known to any one.

Along came Marconi, who knew himself, who knew the world, who understood life, who realized the value of the method discovered by the unknown professor. With native ingenuity he took up the principle of wireless telegraphy and applied it practically. He unearthed it, brought it into the light of day, he exploited this wonderful system and acquired an enormous fortune and undying fame—money and reputation together.

A brave soldier and a valiant one, who knew how to use the weapons that he found, to put them in action in the fight, and how to conquer the enemy. It became his privilege to plant his standard upon the field of victory.

In the same way another man died poor. Charles Tellier, to whom a tardy recognition is now being accorded, discovered the principle of cold-storage. But he remained in the background, afraid of notoriety, of the struggle, of defeat, of surprizes, of discouragement, of false hopes, of success achieved or lost at tremendous cost. He remained aloof, wealthy in what he had done, cherishing the precious jewel of his obscurity at the bottom of a box he never opened.

Countless companies have taken up and applied the principle of Charles Tellier. They were bold and strong. They have fought the fight and won it. Every one of these companies is to-day rich and powerful.

A mere mechanic, Michaud, discovered the principle of the bicycle pedal. He died in misery after a life of poverty and privation.

His invention was exploited by a number of companies and has been the source of fantastic wealth.

These poor inventors were not men with the practical sense. They one and all lacked the initial hardihood to fling themselves into the struggle and to conquer a place for themselves. They lacked decision, will-power, force.

They had experience of life, perhaps, a sad experience and unhappy memories. They were afraid to venture. Did they, perhaps, struggle a little at first? No. They had not the gifts. They were weary, shrinking, devoid of courage; had ceased fighting. A melancholy indifference was born in them. Death came finally and closed the tired eyes that had not been fitted to look life in the face.

They were, doubtless, poor fellows, a little bit too straight-laced, a thought too particular.

Some good qualities are as great a disadvantage as useless baggage. They had, doubtless, every one of them, some sentiment that was dear to their hearts, but sentiment is generally a spurious coinage that one can not put in circulation and that no one will accept.

The men who exploited their wonderful ideas, sterile, also, for their authors, were of the sort who extract success from everything. True prophetic dreamers, devoid of excessive sensibility, hesitation, and fear, bold fighters whom victory has crowned with laurel.

Without doing harm to any one, without doing anything that is wrong, remaining always within the strict limit of exact rectitude, while not striving to acquire that exaggerated virtue which results in nothing but his own satisfaction the man who has the practical sense will make a success in life.

The love of virtue is a laudable thing in itself, but it is not infrequently a rock upon which all our most cherished schemes wreck themselves completely. Never push your qualities to extremes. Never make a parade of sentimentalism which is only harmful. What good can it do you? Who will like you the better for it? Who will imitate you? What will you gain by it?

Do not be so short-sighted! To hurt yourself in order to do good to others is an antinomy, that is to say, something contradictory to all the laws of reason.

The apostleship of perfection is a part that usually meets with ridicule and achieves nothing.

To look for opportunities of being generous is really a piece of presumption, a defiance cast into the teeth of fate. Life punishes follies of this sort, so do not indulge in them.

A happy mean, an exact balance—such are always talismans that will bring success.

To be practical is to be honest and to be upright. These qualities are those of the man who knows himself thoroughly and who knows his world. They are weapons even more potent than the famous stock-in-trade we spoke of earlier in this book.

It is always possible to do a thing in a practical way, to get all the advantage obtainable from circumstances while keeping within the limits of honesty. That which overpasses these—chivalry, for instance, or a mania for virtue, or a yearning for perfection—is merely a means of building up barriers and accumulating obstacles against your plans. Be just, by all means, but be so without entering into minute

details of sentimentality, which will make you a hopeless failure, a back number, a species of coward.

If your practical sense should sometimes lead you further than the permissible limits, it will always be a praiseworthy thing in you, if, after the affair is accomplished and you have gained your success, you indulge in a little generosity to satisfy your conscience, if you allow yourself to follow your good impulses a little.

Before the victory is won your motto should be, "Every man for himself and let every one take his chance"; but after you have gained the day there is nothing to hinder you from changing it, in the hour of triumph, in your own mind to "One for all" or, so far as lies within the limits of your power, to "an enlightened and far-sighted generosity."

That you may understand thoroughly the precepts which are crystallized in a single word:

"Advantage,"

which are in harmony with a second:

"Rectitude,"

and which are founded upon a third:

"Adroitness,"

we must cite certain examples.

Take the case of a woman who is the mistress of a school of foreign languages. A good-hearted soul, she has engaged as teachers some of her old pupils. She pays them generously, but does not charge much for her courses.

At the end of the year the good lady perceives that she is going to have a hard time to make both ends meet. She goes to a friend with her tale of wo. This friend advises her to take as teachers foreigners who are anxious to acquire the language, in other words, to take these foreigners as pupils, whom she will not pay for their services and who will not pay her for her course.

This advice is eminently practical. Now what does the mistress of the school decide to do?

If she is a woman who is over-sensitive, of too great delicacy, foolishly kind-hearted, she will pay no attention to the advice. She will not have the courage to dismiss her present teachers, who are all her friends.

If, on the other hand, she is a woman of poise, who has a keen eye for her own interests, and wishes to succeed, she will put the advice in practise. She will give her teachers notice and will make arrangements to replace them with foreigners, as pupil-teachers.

She will only be acting in a practical manner. She will merely be saying to herself, "Everyone for himself!"

But there is nothing to prevent her from keeping in touch with the friends she has had to discharge, from explaining to them what has forced her to take this measure, from looking about among all her associates to get them something to do, from providing them with the employment she can no longer afford them. In this way she will have satisfied both the hard necessities of life and the kindness of her own heart.

Of what use would it be to show foolish generosity in such a case? To keep on paying her teachers high salaries and to be unable to raise the price of her course?

She would inevitably get into difficulties; and when her school closed, and she found herself without a livelihood, they would say of the poor thing:

"What a fool she was!"

That would be all the pay she would get for her excessive goodness of heart.

A second example:

A business man, in want of money to keep his business going, puts an advertisement in the paper:

"A good opportunity is offered to a young man of family who possesses the sum of—— of joining a reputable business-house."

A very innocent young man fresh from college answers the advertisement, and suggests coming to see him in the company of his parents.

The business man is not rich, but he is exceedingly astute. He realizes that he must inspire confidence. His business is a very good one, he merely lacks money to make it a flourishing success. This money it is essential for him to obtain, but in order to procure it he must throw a little dust in people's eyes, he must give them some sort of guaranty.

A poor man, he lives in an apartment of the simplest description, without any servants. His clothes are by no means impeccable. The apartment and the clothes, ostentatiously exhibited, would deprive him of the chance he is looking for.

A friend of his is approached and agrees to let him have a few hundred francs to buy some elegant clothes. Another friend agrees to lend him his apartment in which to hold his interview with the people who have the needed cash.

These two friends are knowing people who give him sage advice as to his reasons for failing

to acquire that one little thing that counts for so much—money.

The young man and his parents appear upon the scene. They talk with our friend over the affair, which is interesting, practical, obviously profitable. The parents become quite enthusiastic.

Moreover, the apartment that our business man has borrowed is stylish, in the best of taste, furnished in the most artistic manner. If it does not evidence wealth it certainly indicates ease and comfort. The dinner is exceptionally good.

The host is clearly a man who is in good circumstances. His rooms suggest the worker and the thinker who still has time for the cultured side of life.

The two good people felicitate themselves on finding such a fine opening for their son.

The business arrangements do not give them a moment's pause. They consent eagerly to the proposition placed before them.

The business is concluded. The money, magical wand of fate, is forthcoming. The business, conducted with intelligence, prospers exceedingly. In this way it gradually leads its proprietor to success and into easy circumstances.

Our friend has arrived!

But to achieve success he has been guilty of fraud, of deception. He has acted a part.

But what was the harm?

What would these people of substance have done had they met a business man who was obviously poor, who was nervous, whose clothes were out-at-elbows, who lived in a garret and waited upon himself? They would have gone away disgusted and angry. Perhaps they might have been practical enough to profit by this avowed poverty, to take advantage of the poor man in his hour of need.

He, however, was wise enough not to be restrained from his purpose by any foolish ideas of loyalty. He had to succeed, and to do it he had to become a fraud for the time being, to deceive these people, to play a part. This hurt nobody at all. It was the act of a wise man.

Where he would have been criminal would have been to use these means to accomplish his purpose had his business been worthless, had he been perfectly aware of this and deliberately used false pretenses to extract money from these people.

In such a case there would have been nothing in any way practical about his scheme, as,

sooner or later, the fraud would have been discovered and the actor would have had everything to lose, his confidence for the future, his personal safety, his chances of starting afresh.

But inasmuch as the enterprise was perfectly certain of success, and as the man knew how people look at things and was in absolute need of the material means of meeting his necessities, he had the courage, the audacity, the decision, the will-power, all the needful qualities to force the hand of destiny, and dared to employ the favorable winds which would turn in his direction the weathercock of chance. He availed himself of the services of a vice transformed into a virtue—deception.

He stole nothing. He gave these people in exchange for the money he needed his invention, his skill. It was imperatively necessary, however, that this invention, this skill, should be presented to them in the most flattering colors. These colors he did not possess. So he borrowed them and simply said, "These belong to me!"

Did he remain within the limits of honesty? Most assuredly. He simply had the daring and the address to provide against the distrust and the pig-headedness of these people while being

absolutely loyal to the main issues in the matter. The business itself was just as good as he told them it was. This was, after all, the really crucial thing. The rest was merely a question of skilful stage-setting, of the adroit mounting of the play to be performed.

Another good example will present itself to your notice at every step you take, in town, in the country, on a journey, everywhere—the advertisements.

Advertising is half truth or frank untruth, permitted openly, in newspapers, in history, in song, in one's letters, in diplomacy, in everything that is capable of expressing itself in words. You excuse and understand this misrepresentation. It amuses and interests you. You recognize it as necessary. You say to yourself:

"Nothing succeeds without advertising!"

Nowadays publicity consists in the flattering presentation of a subject, in the praise of the qualities it possesses, and of many which it does not. However good, however advantageous a thing may be, if you merely say "It is good—It is advantageous!" you will interest nobody. But proclaim that it is a marvel; invent the most extravagant stories about it, and you will

attract every one's attention, and it will become popular and successful. Enthuse, always, enthuse. The world is perfectly aware that you are doing it, but believes that at the bottom of your enthusiasm there is a basic bedrock of truth and that the percentage of fact is directly proportioned to the breadth of your claims.

Why do you act differently to other people? Why are you backward and hesitating? One must run with the wolves if one does not want to be devoured by them. In the midst of deception, you too must be a deceiver, but preserve in every one of these deceptions your bedrock of safety; that is to say, let this necessity be merely the superficial appearance, the obvious device, while the fundamental truth lives and grows, and stands ready to come to your aid when the means is no longer of use, and has become inadvisable or dangerous.

The whole secret of the practical sense is to gild, and to again regild, but to gild and to regild that which is already refined gold, so that when the varnish of flattery is scratched it will still remain underneath something that is of good value and of sterling worth.

Let people say of you, if they will, "He is a smart fellow!" but never "He is a fraud!"

Have the adroitness to choose the fine line that divides these two methods of becoming successful from each other. Remember that one is always fruitful and that the other will prove barren sooner or later.

CHAPTER III

NATIONS AND PEOPLES WITH THE PRACTICAL SENSE

When you are at the seashore, on the edge of the ocean covered with tumbling waves, you reflect to yourself:

"All these waves are alike and yet each one of them has its own peculiarity. Each has its own shape, its color, its destiny. Those I see now are not the same waves that broke here yesterday, will not be those that will break here to-morrow, and yet, when I behold this sea, when I return here years hence, perhaps, I shall certainly find the same wonderful vista of tossing waters on which the sunshine glitters by day and the moon plays by night."

Men are like the waves of the sea. They are all alike and yet no two are the same.

Go from one beach to another and the aspect of the sea will change. In one place it will be clearer, more placid, more beautiful. In another it will be more somber and more threat-

ening. In still another it will be coquettish and capricious. And, in speaking of it, you will say: "The sea at X——, the sea at Y——, the sea at Z——, the sea at T——," and none of these will be for you the same sea. They will all be different seas, quite unlike each other.

Nevertheless, those natural basins which we term harbors or beaches constitute the boundaries of that great ocean which covers three-fourths of the globe, and just as the land is essentially land so is the sea essentially sea. There is only one ocean.

But this mysterious being, this sea, has certain defects and certain good qualities, and in certain parts of its vast expanse we find repeated the same defects, the same good qualities, the same aspects.

This is an image of humanity. All human beings belong to the great family of mankind, but among these beings there are defects and qualities, there are certain natural defects which one finds repeated in certain groups and individuals.

And these resemblances unite men together and form what are known as races. And among the races there are still other groups which make up the nations.

All races of men have not the same capabilities. Since we are now considering particularly the practical sense, let us ask ourselves, "Is humanity as a whole endowed with practical sense?"

Assuredly not, since there are men who are feeble and men who are strong, intellectual men and fools. There are entire races and peoples who are practical or not practical.

Since this book was written first for the French, let us ask as our first question: "Are the French a practical people?"

If we were we would dominate the world. We have all the qualities to make us lords of the globe except those which go to make practical sense.

The Frenchman lacks patience. He has no foresight. He has no perseverance, no real judgment.

Intelligence, decision, astuteness, will-power, adaptability, these are his good qualities.

But he has with them these defects—rashness, instability, credulousness.

These faults have caused him enormous losses. Behind his cheerful smile there are often bitter memories. But of what use have these harsh experiences been to him? He is a bird of grace-

ful shape, charming, frivolous, and bold, who forgets the storm just as soon as the sun begins to shine, and who does not know enough to go into hiding when the tempest threatens.

The Frenchman is like a rooster who commences to crow at the light of a lamp, believing it to be the rising sun, and never dreaming for an instant that the hand that carries this deceiving star is that which will presently seize him, cut his throat, and throw him into the pot.

Compared to the world as a whole, the French are a southern race of Indo-Latin origin. They carry in their breasts an inheritance of oriental fatalism coupled with the Latin vivacity of spirit and force of character.

All the races of this family, the French, Spanish, Italians, Portuguese, Rumanians, are every one of them devoid of a practical sense. Reflect for a moment upon the names of the peoples you have just read. Think over their histories, and you will see to just what an extent these races fall short of the qualities that make for greatness. The French are, perhaps, a trifle different from the others, destined to a destiny a little higher than that of their sister races, but this is precisely because there is in the French people some slight infiltration of

foreign blood, there are some strange elements with which the North has enriched its veins, co-ordinating and solidifying the gifts it has received, but always leaving dormant that atavistic strain of fatalism. In the French this fatalism has become lack of balance, forgetfulness, carelessness, and want of depth.

Little by little, without a doubt, in proportion as Northern elements become imposed into the race, the French character will change, and will gradually add to its natural wealth of gifts that of solidity, of purposefulness. This will become for this people a unique but infinitely fragile gem that the hand of a master-craftsman can set solidly and make permanent and secure.

The Indo-Latin race does not possess the practical sense. It is a fortunate family of peoples, brilliant, intellectual, richly endowed, but withal a thought too fortunate. It despises the efforts which seem to it unnecessary. It is a family of peoples foredoomed to decadence, because it has been too richly endowed by nature and has never had to struggle long for anything; because its experiences have never taught it a bitter enough lesson; because its to-morrows have never been sufficiently wretched. The Indo-Latin race inhabits mag-

nificent countries, where the sun shines warmly and the earth is rich and fruitful. Of what use is experience to such a race. The sun is still gold, the sky a marvel of blue, the land fertile, the fruits and the flowers sweet and plentiful.

"What is the use of a practical sense?" the Italian will say to you, showing his white teeth in an engaging smile, while with a gesture of unstudied grace he indicates to you the fields of corn and of rye, of barley and of rice, the olive woods, the lemon trees, the orange groves, the plantations of flax, of hemp, and of cotton, the smiling vineyards, the bay twinkling in a bath of mellow sunlight, the blue sea glittering under a still bluer sky.

"What is the use of a practical sense?" the Spaniard will ask you, opening wide his dusky eyes in wonder. "Our soil is so fertile that there is no need of tilling it to have it produce all we need. We have iron-mines, we have coal-mines, we have silver-mines. We are wealthy. An orange, a pomegranate, some sweet peppers, a little sunlight, a flower, a word or two of love-making, a prayer—and we are happy. One should struggle, you say! But to what end? What is the use of it? It is wearisome work?"

Every Latin will always say, "What is the use?"

"Let us enjoy the fleeting moment!"

It is by no means the same with the Germanic races. The peoples who compose this race possess the practical sense. Such are the Germans (Prussians, Saxons, Suabians, Bavarians), the Dutch, the Flemish, the Scandinavians, the Swedes, and the Danes.

These people have suffered. Experience has left its cruel scars upon them. They have learned prudence in a hard school. Terrible invasions have rolled over them, pitiless and shod with iron. Since their's is no enchanted soil they have had to labor, to be patient, to persevere, to develop the courage to overcome their ill-fortune, the foresight to avert it.

Two of all these races are particularly endowed with a practical sense, the Flemish and the Germans. The Flemish are tireless workers, far-sighted, deeply attentive. The Germans are tenacious, of tremendous will-power, of dogged perseverance.

The Flemish have succeeded in achieving their independence.

The Germans have been able to make for themselves a splendid place in the world. They have

imposed this upon themselves. They have become a great nation, a redoubtable and mighty power.

Practical, above all, are our conquerors in the fatal war of 1870. Sentimental when it pays them to be so, but hard as adamant when occasion calls for it. Adroit schemers under their mask of heaviness, a little brutal into the bargain—and this last is, perhaps, their sole mistake and one that may one day stand seriously in the way of their success.

A single comparative example will show the practical spirit of the Germans. All the patents that other countries refuse to grant, Germany will recognize. She accepts them and makes money out of them. It is the sardonic purpose of the man who says, "Take everything! In the mass there will surely be something that I can use!"

For this reason their commerce and their industries are strong and prosperous.

Another thing. Germans will voluntarily expatriate themselves. Their families are large. What is the sense of remaining glued to one's native soil, where one can achieve a mediocre success at the best. Far better to go out into the world, to gain the wealth that experience

brings, to acquire ideas, obtain positions, make money, and finally, to return home at the last to spend among one's own people the fortune that one has made abroad. This is clearly the viewpoint of the young Germans one meets in every quarter of the globe.

They love their families more than any other race. But they are wise enough to sacrifice this love for a time upon the altar of success, to enjoy it freely and fully later on.

One last remark. If you have traveled in Germany, you will have observed the perfection to which all forms of public service have attained—the postal service, telephones, telegraphs, railways, the highways, etc.

The Germans can say "Yes! Your cities are beautiful and splendid, but they are dirty. One is ill in them, their death-rate is high, their birth-rate is much lower than ours, where hygiene exists, where cleanliness is king, where one lives, where one is born and develops one's powers in contentment. Our people are robust, and healthy, and will make unconquerable soldiers, first-rate citizens."

They could go farther and say "Oh, yes! You are intelligent enough! You are clever and alert, but your mail service is poor and slow.

Your postal employees are underpaid and inefficient. They are dissatisfied with their work and disgruntled at the nation. It is the same thing with every branch of your public service. The whole country suffers from this condition of affairs. With us all is contentment, satisfaction, comfort, and peace.

"Ask the peoples we have conquered what they have to say about the change. They do not love us Germans, it is true, but they are delighted with the comfort in which they live, and that is the incentive that moves men. Every man has at bottom that feeling of egoism which leads him to prefer the place where he finds himself most comfortably situated."

And it is exactly these methods that make the German the redoubtable and adroit foe that he has proved himself to be.

The Anglo-Saxon race (the English) is also of the Germanic family. A practical people if ever there was one, possessing more economic gifts, and being, thanks to them, a mighty nation.

All of you have read at school the story of the French chemist and engineer, Lebon, who invented lighting by gas. He made a number of experiments upon gas derived from the com-

bustion of wood. He made a statement of his discoveries to the Institute and took out a patent on his process. He also wrote a pamphlet about his researches and his discoveries.

No one paid any attention to the labors of Lebon. No notice was taken of his discovery, because the gas he was able to make was impure, gave a poor light, and emitted a most disagreeable smell.

From sheer lack of the practical sense the French left the discovery at this stage, without looking any further, without seeing how to get some good out of this process.

It was only a little later, when the English had devoted intelligent attention to the discovery of Lebon, and had brought it to perfection, that the French understood what their foolish indifference had cost them, what their lack of foresight had lost to them.

The English have the qualities of the French and of the Germans as well. This people ripened by the sea in a small and confined country, has had the skill to extend that country into every part of the globe. Wherever one may sail one always sees British possessions.

The Englishman is naturally a wanderer and a traveler. To become powerful he had but one

weapon—the sea. Upon that sea he has sailed forth into the four quarters of the world and planted his flag upon them. His practical qualities have thus been mechanically developed by the necessities he has had to face and the experiences he has encountered.

The mere name of England invokes the idea of a great industrial wealth; of an agricultural method that is wise and painstaking; of a prosperity that has no equal. Nature has endowed the Anglo-Saxon race by bringing the most valuable elements to its shores, but it has made the most wise and intelligent use of these, and its spirit of the practical has counted for much in its success.

In England the public utilities are perfectly managed. Everywhere one finds convenience and facility combined with order.

Little by little English methods have become introduced into France. This is the most certain proof that the English are our superiors in practical matters.

These English methods consist of hygienic but comfortable homes, of a style of dress less coquettish, perhaps, less chic, but how convenient in its simplicity. They imply tailors whom the women end by liking after receiving them

coldly at first, tailors whose goods are durable, thoroughly reliable, and untouched by the weather. They mean men's clothes that are looser, less tight-fitting, of more serviceable quality. They stand for hats and shoes. They include gloves of materials that tend to supplant the kid glove. They comprise all the details and accessories of dress. Hygiene and refined comfort take the place of elegance and style, which are frequently unhealthy and uncomfortable.

English methods mean also a new style of furnishing, particularly a new style of equipping our workshops. They include better ways of working as well. They cover new ideas in eating wisely.

English methods have taught us the practise of the athletic sports which make strong races and breed good citizens. All outdoor games have come to us from England. Little by little this need of movement, of outdoor life, of strength, has become a part of our French bodies. It is a salutary and splendid example of development that has come to us from across the English Channel.

And all this is essentially the practical sense as applied to the little things of daily life and,

becoming embodied in them, growing at last to be a second nature.

I do not believe that I am much mistaken when I affirm that the nation which possesses the practical sense in the highest degree is the English people.

One last example of the practical. The American people, the democracy of the world, formed of dissimilar elements drawn from all countries, a mixture of races which have fled from some oppression or some injustice; of races which have suffered and been tried by fire and have carried to the New World all the rich inheritance of their past; races endowed with foresight, with enlightenment, with knowledge of life; races of courage, of will-power, of earnest purpose.

The American people thus created has had to undergo terrific struggles to establish itself in the New World and to make it its own. It derives its practical sense not only from its early intimate experiences, but also from all the diverse elements of which it is composed, and every one of which has brought to it some personal experiences, some recollections, some aspirations, some lessons drawn from its previous life.

Above all, the English element dominates America. It is England that has become the heart of the American race.

To sum up. This race has been formed of a selection of adventurers, men of courage and practical sense. In this country, more than anywhere else, one sees the development of the mighty movement that is known as the struggle for life. The soil of America has been, is now, and long will be the part of our earth where men go to struggle, where they learn how to struggle, where they become skilled in attack and defense in the great battle that never ceases.

From America comes to us that science so gigantic and so practical, the science of publicity—a method of adroit misrepresentation, of dressing up the truth in glowing colors—a skilled means of making money and profit out of everything.

An American motto is "Money is everything!"

A simple slogan, frank to the point of daring, a bit cynical, perhaps, but how penetrating and how true.

They also say "Sentiment is ruinous!"

Another saying filled with truth and with the spirit of the practical is:

"Sentiment sometimes leads to ruin. It always leads to mediocrity!"

Since we are on the subject of races and peoples I can not finish without mentioning the Jewish race.

An unhappy race it is, dispersed and fugitive, scattered over all parts of the world; a race of rare intelligence, having representatives in all the arts, all the sciences; possessing in the highest degree the gift of commerce and of business; knowing by heart the hearts of men, and having paid for its knowledge by innumerable sufferings. The Jewish race is the prototype of the practical spirit, of finesse, of the science of gain, because it is also the prototype of martyrdom and of every form of human misery.

Having suffered in every fiber, it is prepared and ready for any fate. Sentiment is dead in it. It conceals its distrust most adroitly. It has learned how to smile and to flatter to conquer the better. The Jewish race is hated, but unjustly. It is only what all other races have made it, and this hatred, this cruelty that has everywhere been shown to it, is what has made it strong. It has graduated from the school of misfortune, a hard school which turns out none but the most experienced scholars.

All this leads us to the reflection that races, peoples, and individuals can only acquire the practical sense by meditating upon the lessons of destiny.

Never complain of the blows of fortune, but strive to comprehend them aright, to understand exactly their whys and wherefores, to study their consequences, and, having done so, you should engrave all these wise counsels upon your memory.

So, becoming little by little better informed, and as a result more and more far-sighted and strong, you will be able to divine, to foresee, to prevent, to prepare yourself for future endeavors.

"To every living thing misfortune is a godsend!"

"Every misfortune carries with it its reason and its lesson!"

Study these two maxims and never allow yourself to be beaten by the disappointments with which life is filled. These are merely the difficult tasks which will end by making a finished scholar of you.

Do you know what they say to the apprentice who smashes his fingers with a hammer:

"That is your trade being knocked into you!"

Every time you receive a blow in the struggle say to yourself with courage, "My trade is being knocked into me!" Thus day by day you will learn the lesson of life, you will discover how to attack and how to defend yourself, and how to make a little place all your own in the sunshine, conquered adroitly, unerringly by all the means with which nature has endowed you and all those, also, which you have acquired.

Remind yourself of the races who have been practical. Their history can be your own. Learn to know it and to ponder over it. Every story of a race is a romance aglow with passion, in which you will always find tears, and blood, defeats and victories. Learn then its lessons. Learn to know as much of events as you are able. It will help you, it will make the path lighter for you; it will make you wise and strong.

CHAPTER IV

WOMAN

Has She the Practical Spirit?

WOMAN possesses the practical sense. She has the natural gifts that lead to this science:

Patience;

Perseverance;

Perspicacity;

Finesse;

Attention;

Insight;

and also a species of will-power composed of her pride and her faith.

The practical sense in woman is the product of atavism. Woman is a being whose past has been one long story of oppression and suffering, from Eve clear down to the most modern of Suffragettes. She is a being who for long ages has had merely duties to perform, without having any rights that she could claim, a creature, defenseless, unsupported.

The soul that suffers and knows misfortune possesses in a greater measure than others the

gift of sensitiveness. Woman is an exquisitely sensitive creature. Her brain, which carries by inheritance within it so many tragic memories of past misery, is endowed with an insight, with an intuition little short of marvelous.

In the stone age, the woman who lived in a cave, like the animals, possest the practical sense adopted to that condition of life, just as the animals do. She knew how to repel the attacks of beasts, to protect her family from the weather, to save them from starvation. From a distance she scented the approach of an enemy. Encountering only the primitive folks of existence, she already met them with intuition.

Whence came these qualities of hers?

From suffering, without a doubt. Man dominated woman by sheer brute strength. He ruled her with the rod of fear. The fear of his chastisements and of his brutalities created intelligence in woman. To this fear there was added another motive, her motherly tenderness, her instinctive desire to protect her young. In this darkened brain there already shone a glimmer of light.

On the brutalized face of her master she learned to read the signs, as one reads a book.

She divined his moods. She saw his fits of rage coming before they broke. She learned in this way to foresee, to dissimulate, to lie, to act a part. She was alert, adroit, patient, watchful.

She applied all these qualities to the stern necessities of her daily life, to the hunt for food, to the care of her cave, to the needs of her family. Just as she learned to understand her brutal master, she learned to understand nature. And since for her, in her primitive simplicity, life was this and no more—her husband, her children, her cave, the great forest haunted by savage beasts, the sky of gray or blue, the air scorching or chill, the water of the stream, the stones under her feet—since all these things were for her love, home, existence, it may be safely asserted that in remote and primitive times woman was the only being who really thought, the only creature who looked the problem of life in the face.

And so down through the ages, until she has reached our days of wider knowledge, of greater enlightenment, woman has always been the timid and fearful slave, ever watchful in her distrust of man, her master, and of life that meant suffering.

From her weakness, by sheer force of her intentions, she has been able to forge weapons for herself. Patiently, quietly, by studying for all these ages the giant who has opprest her, she has discovered his weak points, his needs, and his defects. Furtively, with an adroitness that escaped observation, she has installed herself in these breaches in his armor, has established herself in them and reigns therein supreme. Little by little woman has climbed upward to the assault upon man. The long road that lies between the miserable creature clad in leaves and with the skins of beasts, who slunk trembling into the cavern where the shaggy male roared his imprecations at her, terrible in his brutality, and the marvel of modern times who glides sinuously across the tufted carpet of her boudoir to meet her mastered yet jealous husband, this perfumed wonder, clad in shimmering satins and rich velvets, covered with pearls and roped with gems—that long road possesses, it almost seems, something of the magical along it, something supernatural, terrifying.

The woman once a slave has become an equal and a queen. And this by very reason of her experience, of her heavy burden of suffering,

because of the brutalities and the injustice she has endured for ages, of the fear that has been her daily and hourly companion.

That burden that has cut into her frail shoulders, and under which she staggered and grew weak, but, fierce and faithful as she was, never fell, never grumbled overmuch—that burden has changed suddenly and became transferred in her hands into a weapon of terror, a promise of vengeance, a sword of steel that will strike home when the battle is met.

The fight begins, the sword is keen and sure, the woman sees victory coming her way. Now it is the dominated who dominates, the silent who speaks, the slave who voices her rights, the opprest who insists upon her rightful place. Now it is that she who has been despised despises in her turn. Now it is this frail being who inspires fear.

The slave who for long and lonely ages has remained silent in mysterious commune with nature has passed down as a heritage to her daughters and the heirs of all her sufferings the sense of intuition. It is from this quality, her first and greatest friend, that woman has derived all her help and her earliest strength to struggle.

Practical always, woman has discovered that

man, her redoubtable master, can not live without her. She knows that nature has created her, the timid and shrinking companion, to play the principal part in the life of man.

She one day reflects to herself: "Why am I a woman? Why is my skin finer and whiter than that of this being who lives with me? Why are my eyes brighter and more tender? Why are my lips redder, my teeth more brilliant? Why have I been given this wonderful hair, long and lustrous?"

While thinking thus, she has watched the being who lives with her, and has observed that at certain times the bold eyes have taken on a softer light, that the rough hands have become capable of the tenderest gestures, that the harsh voice has grown sweet and strong—that everything about this creature exhaled a sort of prayer. Now what is the reason for this change?

By slow degrees she has grown to understand that it was the magic of her beauty.

The nature that lies deep down within her has revealed its secret to this silent supplicant who has demanded an answer with her great eyes, pleading and melancholy. It speaks to her thus:

"Your beauty—that is what makes the change in man. It is the pitfall, the trap I spread before his feet to give rise in his heart to desire. This desire conceals under its disguise of pleasure that deceives him the one great end for which you and he were both placed upon this earth—the perpetuation of yourselves!"

And from this precious moment, in which nature, of its clemency and kindness, made known to her her own subtle strength, woman has understood all the value as a weapon of her beauty, the pitfall into which every man walks blindly at her will.

Having learned why she was beautiful, woman next set herself to find out how to please.

Then, wealthy indeed in the possession of the two gifts thus revealed to her, she began to feel herself strong. She has made effective use of these two talismans. and by their aid, imperceptibly but surely, slowly but with infinite address, without making a single backward step, and without creating the slightest suspicion in man, she has traveled the road that has led her at last to her throne—that throne from which she rules an autocrat, unconquerable and unconquered.

And suddenly, looking in amazement at this hitherto unknown creature who calmly says, "Make me a place at your side!" man has recognized his companion. He has tried to maintain his domination of fear, but this creature of mystery has brought forth her weapons and the tyrant has bowed his head as he sat upon the throne, he has drawn aside and has made room for her upon it, saying as he did so, "I am King, it is true! But here is the Queen!"

In a low whisper woman said to man, "You will have my smiles, my caresses, my love—I will give you all the joys that my body possesses. Through me you will see your face continued, and your sons grow strong. But in exchange for this you must respect me, you must protect me, you must make me a factor in this life in which I suffer for you. Be good to me or I will revolt against you. I am strong. You little know my strength. See to what I have attained. I can dominate you, master you completely. Give me my rights and learn to understand that you have your duties!"

But this was not said disagreeably or combatively. No trace of anger did she show on her face, nor make a single threatening gesture, nor in any way depart from her elegant repose.

Prepared for her vindication just as she was for happiness, moving, captivating, adorable, and tender, a feline creature who blushed even as she smiled—she conquered the confidence of her equal. He did not laugh at her. He loved her the more because he recognized her power. Seeing her so calm, so seductive, he became afraid of the mystery that lay beneath all this sweetness, and he preferred to become the ally of the woman who showed that she might well be an implacable and deadly foe.

It is then to her practical sense that woman owes the place that she has been clever enough to make for herself in modern society, and which, as the centuries roll along, will become more and more one of power and of prestige.

In every act of her life woman gives evidence of her practical sense. I except only one class of women, the idle, the unintelligent butterflies whose brains have not retained the impression of the long heritage of tragic experience the sex has endured during the march of the ages. This class of women commit follies and extravagances which are, properly speaking, but the manifestation of woman's whim when unbalanced.

Thanks to her practical sense, woman is

often the most useful auxiliary to man in life. And when man once has the good sense to believe in her, to make her his helpmeet, to listen to her advice, to pay attention to what she divines intuitively, and to be guided by her foresight, he has obtained for himself a wonderful ally and a great factor in achieving success.

What is the part the woman plays in the family? Man in theory has the duty of providing for the want of the household. Upon him devolves the duty of earning their daily bread.

The woman looks after the interests of the family, watches over the home. Her foresight exhibits itself in economy, in orderliness. She provides for the future. She foresees the needs of the family. With all her powers she labors for its welfare. Her practical sense is, then, divided into a number of aptitudes, some of them quite astonishing.

Man, when at home, plays a single part—that of man. The woman plays all sorts of parts, adapts herself to all sorts of emergencies. She assumes one rôle after another without leaving the house. She is in turn manager, worker, accountant, business-woman, teacher, law-giver, trainer in the rough struggle for existence,

mistress, wife, mother, priestess of beauty, of tenderness, and of love.

When the man is away from home and the woman who is really a woman is keeping this home together for him, she is seen at the height of all her efforts for making up for the absence, for the departure of the head of the family.

When the woman leaves the home we see shiftlessness and disorder creeping in everywhere in her place. In order to reestablish order and comfort there must be found another woman who will replace her who is gone, who has departed.

"Goddess of the hearth" woman has been called. It is because she possesses the necessary gifts for the beautifying and the transforming of everything within the home.

Man should have faith in woman, he should give ear to her warnings and to her counsel. He should not be afraid that he will lower himself by asking her advice. "Enlighten me!" he should say, and this will be on his part a splendid exercise toward the ultimate attainment of the practical sense.

As to the certainty of woman's intuitions, there are an immense number of instances, if one had but the time to enumerate them. If men

would only listen to women what a host of disappointments and of disillusions they would avoid! But they are foolishly proud, they will never admit knowingly to her face the value of her counsel. Such pride is unpractical and useless. I am tempted to believe that the men who succeed in life are those who have long ago cast overboard this silly pride and who have accepted wisdom, even if they have had to learn it from their foes.

Finally, to show how much men have to be thankful for to women in the matter of acquired intuition, and a practical sense, I will recount a little story which is probably not unlike something that has actually happened to everybody.

D——, an honest, hard-working fellow, doing very fairly in life, and married to a charming wife, a splendid manager, met an old army friend one Sunday evening. The two former comrades were naturally delighted to run across each other. They went, also naturally enough, to a neighboring café to renew their acquaintance, to relive their old days in arms, to talk about the past, and to tell a little of the present.

D—— came home, feeling very happy and jolly, and told his wife all about the meeting.

Mrs. D—— said at once:

"Did you tell your friend that you were married? You are rather late for dinner, you know!"

D—— replied: "My dear! What could I do? I got up to come home, but X—— laughingly said to me, 'Good heavens! Surely you can go home late for once! Your wife ought to be wise enough to know that a man isn't a child, and that she can't keep him continually in leading-strings.'"

Mrs. D—— made no answer to this, but secretly decided in her own mind that this unknown friend of her husband's was clearly antagonistic to her.

"A shifty sort of a fellow, this!" she repeated to herself.

D—— kept talking of his friend all through dinner.

"Did you tell him you were doing very nicely, that you had managed to save some money?" suddenly inquired his wife.

The husband pleaded guilty to this little indiscretion, which had been brought about by his friend's questioning.

"And he! He told you nothing about himself, I suppose?"

The husband acknowledged that on this point his friend had been as dumb as an oyster.

"Did you give him your address?"

"Certainly I did!"

At this Mrs. D—— said suavely: "My dear man. Your old comrade is a gentleman without a position, a person of irregular life. He will pretty soon find himself in need of your help. But if you will take my advice you won't do a thing for him. It will merely be money lost for you, and you will actually be doing him a bad turn!"

D—— exclaimed at this: "But where did you get all these foolish notions from? You don't know X——. You have never even seen him!"

Then, suddenly slapping his forehead and laughing heartily the while, he cried: "Ah! I have it! You are annoyed at him because he persuaded me to sit down again and made me late for dinner, and because he told me that a wife should not attempt to treat her husband as if he were a child in leading-strings just learning to walk!"

"Yes!" replied Mrs. D—— quietly, "I am annoyed at that—and at several other things as well. Listen to me a minute, I beg of you, and you will understand what I mean.

"If you had seen this man get up, and he had said to you that he must go home for dinner, would you have tried to prevent him? No! You would have done as he did. You would have pulled out your watch and would have exclaimed, 'My goodness! It's eight o'clock! What will my wife say? We always dine at eight!'

"You have a home, a wife, a regular hour for dining. You are accustomed to do things in an orderly way here in your own house, the abode of peace and comfort.

"Your friend has no home. He hasn't even a dinner hour! He hasn't got a wife, either, or, if he has one, peace does not reign where she is, and he is the cause of the lack of it. The man who has no regard for the rights of other men's wives has no regard for those of his own wife, if he possesses one, or else he despises the women he can not persuade to marry him and the happiness of a union of which he does not know the meaning.

"A friend who gives you bad advice is not living a good life!

"Let me go on. This man has not said one word to you of what he is doing. He has not given you his address, but, on the contrary, he

has been very careful to get yours, and to find out all about your position, your income, your home life, your savings.

"A man who is curious and yet who says no word about himself, is always curious for a very good reason.

"If he had a good situation and had put by savings he would have told you all about them. Since he questioned you on these points that was what interested him. But he keeps silent about what he did not care to confess.

"He has found out all he could about your affairs because he plans to make use of you. The future will enlighten you considerably as to the schemes of this gentleman. You mark my words!"

D——, altho somewhat overcome by the logic of his wife's remarks, paid but little attention to them, and made no answer to her indictment of his friend, except by shrugging his shoulders with a superior air.

Some weeks later, one evening before D—— had come home from his office, his wife was attending to her household duties when the bell rang.

Mrs. D—— opened the door, outside which stood a stranger, who said to her:

"Is Mr. D—— at home?"

"No, he is not! But I expect him very soon!"

"Will you allow me to wait for him."

"Certainly you may!"

The stranger came in, accepted the chair offered to him, and sat down to wait. After some minutes D—— returned home.

"Ahah, X——! To what do I owe the pleasure?"

"Oh! I was passing by, so I came in to say how-dye-do to you." Then in a lower voice, "I want to speak to you!"

"Will it be all right if my wife is present?"

"No! It is a confidential matter!"

"Then come to see me at the office tomorrow!"

So X——, after a few moment's talk, took his leave.

Mrs. D——, who had heard this conversation, said to her husband.

"This man X—— came to you to borrow money for some obscure purpose of his own. He is afraid of my advice to you, therefore didn't want me to know of it."

Next day X—— came to see D—— at his office.

"My dear fellow, I am in a devil of a hole.

I am at the end of my rope. I have no friends, no home—nothing. Lend me twenty francs!"

D—— gave him the money, and told his wife about it, who remarked, "Twenty francs are of no use to such a man. They are not enough. The man is a gambler. If he comes to you again, follow him and see where he goes when he leaves your office."

During the course of the week X—— came back.

"Bad luck pursues me, my dear fellow. Can you lend me another twenty francs?"

D—— gave him the money and followed him without any compunction.

He trailed him as far as a well-known race-course, at whose gates he entered.

D—— knew enough by that time. He lent the man no more money and soon got rid of this unscrupulous borrower.

His wife had seen the facts clearly at once. And I am convinced that very many women have just this intuitive faculty.

It is from her that the wonderful practical sense comes to all the daughters of Eve.

Man, then, will be well-advised and practical if he will listen to the warnings of this good comrade when she tells him to be careful, if he

will make of her his guide to better things. He will very often have cause to congratulate himself for taking her advice, and will be more than grateful for it. And woman, happy in the new condition because of the new rôle that has been allotted to her, will go on to the acquisition of new qualities. She will become an invaluable associate. She will reach the greatest heights in her part of interpreter between man and his destiny—this frail being who knows them both so well since she has been compelled, ever since the creator first placed her upon earth, to suffer at the hands of destiny and at the hands of man.

CHAPTER V

THE PRACTICAL SPIRIT IN THE CHILD

The child can distinguish perfectly between comfort and discomfort. He is scarcely born before he commences the search for happiness. This search is the foundation of the practical sense.

Happiness to a tiny child consists in sleep, warmth, nourishment, and light. His unhappinesses are all comprised in a feeling of discomfort, from too much feeding, from too great heat or cold, from articles or clothes that hurt him, from his bodily needs.

The human animal loves light and his actions are a witness to this desire. Place a baby in its cradle before the flames of a clear wood fire, and he will laugh. He struggles to get nearer to it. He extends his tiny hands toward the blaze. This effort to take possession of it is an atavistic instinct brought into being by the

practical desire to get hold of everything that is good.

Put the baby in a dark corner. He will sob and cry. In his undeveloped and embryonic brain there is already the will to struggle against that which is ugly or disagreeable. He has an instant feeling of repulsion from that which he perceives to be inimical.

He likes that which will give him a sense of pleasure.

He hates that which will give him a sense of discomfort. He tries to get rid of it. He has but one means, his cries. No one ever taught a child to cry, but he instantly divines that as soon as he begins to cry disagreeable conditions are removed, and pleasant ones take their place. So he cries when he is cold, when he is too warm, when he is hungry, when he is sleepy, when he is in the dark. These tears, these cries constitute his first weapon for the conquest of happiness in his miniature world, and he makes use of this weapon with a will-power and a method that are absolutely instinctive and really quite marvelous.

As the child grows, his practical sense grows with him, and this is so truly a fact that, in order to educate a child, in order to make him

learn good habits and abandon those which are harmful, the promise of a reward of some kind must always be held out to him.

So that little Jack may learn how to drink his soup properly his mother promises him a nice picture-book.

To make him go to bed quietly and like a little man his father promises to take him to the circus.

To make him submit to having his face washed, to being scrubbed, and drest, and combed, the little fellow is promised a splendid ride on the back of a pony.

With the inspiration of these comfortable and pleasant promises good habits form themselves. Little by little the promises grow fewer and are at last abandoned altogether. The child pays them no more serious attention, and in this way good habits become a part of the nature of this small creature.

Then comes school. The child's first step into life, theater of his first duties and his first battles.

When he is in the lowest class he is still given little rewards for being good—interesting stories, sweetmeats, paper flowers, figures of men on animals. What he likes is deftly com-

bined with what will be good for him, and agreeable, and pleasant.

As he grows older a certain something develops in the mind of the child—the sense of possession.

Then one makes the small scholar do his work well by promising him small presents—games for the boys and ribbons or bouquets of flowers for the girls.

This spirit of possession grows apace into the desire for gain, into the yearning to overcome something, and the sweetmeats of the earliest stage, and the playthings of the later stages, give place to the good marks which lead to the gaining of prizes.

Pride now begins to play a part—the spirit of emulation. The desire of advancement. The wish to accomplish something is formed, the yearning to fill a position, to possess the best there is to be had. The child's one idea now is to gain the highest number of marks, to win the best prize, to be first.

At this stage one can say with truth that the man is born in the child. The practical sense learned at school will be that of his after life. The conquest of the things that are vital to existence will be the same as the conquest of

notes of commendation, of crosses of honor, of prizes, and of positions.

Among children at school there are, just as among men, scholars who have the practical sense, those who are adroit, the strong and the weak.

There are the dullards who yet succeed by devious devices. There are the dullards who make errors in foresight; there are the really brilliant; there are the chivalrous and the timid.

At the school to which little Jack goes, there is Louis, known as "Tricky," who, without working very hard, without knowing very much, nevertheless always holds a high place in the class and gets good reports. Louis passes for a good scholar, and yet little Jack and his other companions know him for a lazybones, since he never studies his lessons. They know he wastes his time, because he is an actor in every plot and takes part in all their games. Naturally enough, Louis is given the nickname of "Tricky," on account of his mysterious advancement through all the grades of good scholarship!

There is Tom, the best scholar of the class, who, to all appearances, is merely the equal of

Louis. Yet little Jack and all the other boys know perfectly well that Tom deserves the title because he has an answer for every possible question they can put to him and always has his head buried in his books. He is a boy of serious purpose. He would never think of profiting by a trick or by a fraud. He scorns cribbing. He has nothing to hide, since he never does anything unfair. Little Jack admires Tom. He envies him. He discerns in him a quality of superiority, of rugged honesty.

Besides Tom, and Louis the "Tricky," Jack knows a boy named Harry, who is very easy-going, and very studious, who takes a lot of pains and yet does not grasp his lessons, and who is the butt of the whole class. Thanks to his innocent replies, Harry has a very unhappy time at school. His companions tease him all the time. His teachers are indifferent to him. His parents are dissatisfied at his lack of progress. Nevertheless, the poor child does his very best.

"Oh!" says Jack. "He is stupid."

Jack retails to his father his impressions of the school and of his little companions, and then asks him:

"Tell me, Papa! When you were at school

did you know any 'Tricky' Louis, any Tom, any Harry?"

His father answers: "My boy, there are 'Tricky' Louis, clever Toms, and stupid Harries everywhere. I encountered them at school, I meet them every day. When you are grown to be a man you will have just the same experiences as you have to-day. You will meet 'tricky' people who, without much effort, by means of their astuteness, impose upon others until the time that their schemes, which are often quite dishonest, are discovered and exposed. There are the people who are only imitation-wise; the people who commit errors of foresight, and are hopelessly lost when once the light of truth has been turned upon them. There are the men whose practical sense is warped, and who think that unfairness is a short cut by which they may more quickly reach the goal of success, but who quite forget that along the path they have chosen they are more than likely to encounter obstacles which will in the end make the way quite impracticable.

"There will be also the well-informed, the wise people who have studied life as Tom studies his books. These people will drink in experience like Tom absorbs facts. They will conquer

others by their vital and undeniable force. These are the people of foresight who have examined the road before they have attempted to walk upon it; who have provided themselves with tools to make it practicable and with arms to defend themselves against its dangers. These are the men of practical common sense who know that experience properly acquired is the most valuable talisman they can have.

"You will encounter the feeble people, for whom there are no successes; who have not the courage to will, before whom opportunity passes unrecognized; who have not the daring to seize it when they meet it. These are the derelicts of life, who do what they can, but are never able to do anything worth while. Beings without energy, without weight of balance, whom the great sea of life rolls backward and forward, as the waves of the ocean roll the innumerable pebbles on the shore.

"Imitate Tom, my boy! He is wise, indeed. He is the only one of your school-fellows who seems to understand how to conduct himself so as to succeed.

"Shun the example of Louis and don't be so foolish as to make a model of Harry!"

The child is the man. School is merely life

on a small scale. Parents should be wise enough to foster in their sons and daughters the development of the science of the practical by paying careful attention to the good qualities and the defects that make their appearance at an early stage in the existence of those little beings who are making trial of life.

In the spring the good gardener makes a careful examination of the plants in his garden. With tender care he cuts here the tendrils that are pushing outward, there picks a caterpillar from a leaf, protects elsewhere a tender bud, inserts a prop in another spot, and everywhere digs up the weeds and parasites that threaten to choke the life of the garden.

In the springtime of life those who have to teach children should be good gardeners who watch with the closest attention the unfolding of the flower of the soul. With tender care they must disengage each quality and protect it from being crowded out of existence. They must be the watchful tutors of the fragile plant of humanity. They must see to it that it enters into life straight and supported by the props of good principles. They must strip it of bad habits, the parasitic defects that would mature into vices, and would choke up all the sensitiveness

and the intelligence, without which there can be no true wisdom—these windows by which there will most readily stream in upon the growing plant the light of experience, which is the parent of the practical sense.

PART III

PRACTICALITY: HOW TO ACQUIRE IT

CHAPTER I

HOW TO ACQUIRE THE PRACTICAL SENSE

WE have seen that this science is sometimes a natural gift, but that it is more frequently an acquired one. But even when it is innate, the science of the practical sense must be fostered by intelligent exercises. This amounts to saying that the practical sense demands of the individual a continual preparation.

The acquisition of the practical sense calls for mental exercises and also for physical exercises. To acquire this quality in a superlative degree we must derive the benefits to be obtained by the simultaneous training of the mind and of the body, the education of that which may be summed up in two words as individual force. The ideal of the man of our own day, in view of the daily necessities of life, should be success. His effort to reach this goal must be unremitting. They must be all in all to him, and occupy him to the exclusion of everything else. He must make a point of familiarizing his brain

with this ideal. He must think of it incessantly. He must make of it his one preoccupation, his fixt idea.

It is by means of thought that energy is formed. It is by virtue of thought that man has power over matter. It is also by virtue of thought that he frees himself from the slavery of error. Learn to think boldly, freely, judiciously.

It is by so thinking that you will succeed in solving the enigma that is yourself, in learning the riddle of your own existence. It is by knowing yourself well that you will be able to consider life from an intelligent viewpoint, to study events, and to draw from them deductions that will be of use to you. Your observations must be filled with insight and minutely particular. From them you can derive that precious amulet which will give you the gift of the practical sense—experience.

"Experience is potential energy."

Look carefully and with an open mind into every failure. Put away in a corner of your memory every circumstance that has made an impression upon you, just as models that may serve to form a wonderful dress are arranged one by one in a cupboard. At the psychological

moment look into the recesses of your brain where the impression has been stored against the day of need, this recollection so faithfully preserved in all its beauty of form and color, and place beside it the decision that you have to make. Figure to yourself what the result will look like when it is once done, and compare this with the model which you have kept for your enlightenment, down to the minutest details. In this way you will learn how to judge your own acts and to divine their possible consequences.

Since the practical sense is the search for what will be useful and agreeable to you, it will be then an easy matter for you to decide what choice you must make. You will know at once whether you wish to imitate the model or to do something altogether different. This will depend upon the object at which you aim and upon the picture that your memory calls up before you—this picture that you long ago put away so carefully to serve as a basis for the lesson you would learn to-day.

Experience is an advantage you can turn to immense profit. You will find it infinitely fruitful. It renews itself continuously, and every hour that passes adds to its riches. Learn

to pile up experiences as you would amass savings, like a man of foresight, but do not be miserly with them. Bring them out of your safe every time you stand in need of them, to give generously of the precious store. They will turn to wonderful seed that will spring up along your path as flowers of the rarest beauty. They will be the unseen genii who will lead you by the hand toward the goal that is inscribed with the name of your desire. They will be the kindly stars that will illuminate the darkness of your way, and will render visible the stones that would hurt your feet and the thorns that would wound and tear your flesh.

Thus, your cultivation of this spirit will be by means of experience born of attention and of memory. With a determined purpose to acquire experience, not a minute of your life will be uselessly employed. Every moment will be for you the preparation for others which will rise, each in its turn, from the unknown gulf of the future.

To acquire the practical sense you must, then, accustom your intellect to look at life carefully, and to draw from this observation examples that will be of service to you, which will combine to train your intuition, your perspicacity, your foresight.

By utilizing the numerous examples you will encounter every day of your life you will very soon accustom yourself to this practise.

To seek for the practical side of life should be for you a constant endeavor, and you will learn to make this purpose so thoroughly a part of your existence that, when you are confronted with a serious situation, you will take the practical way out of it quite naturally and without any violence to your feelings, without any appreciable effort, just as every evening, mechanically, and without giving it a thought, one takes one's way along the familiar path to one's home, one mounts the steps, one opens the doors, one hangs up one's coat and one's hat in their accustomed places—all this quite mechanically, because one has repeated the same acts so many scores of times with the same regularity that they have become the accepted order of things and not to perform them would be an absolute upheaval of our habits.

Accustom yourself, therefore, to be practical in everything that you have to do.

You are going out, for instance. You have to go in a certain direction. Before you open the door, think to yourself a moment.

"I must go there. I must pass such and such

a place. Can I not profit by this necessity to accomplish this or that?"

"Here is a dress that I think is about ready for the rag-bag. Is it time to throw it away? Of what possible further use can it be to me?"

Force your mind to see something in this dress over and above a piece of goods that is worn out and good for nothing but to be thrown away.

Look over the dress in detail.

It has six buttons that are still serviceable. Cut off the buttons. The ribbon on the waist-band is still in quite good condition, unworn and whole, and can be used for another dress. Take off the ribbon of the waistband.

Then there is the lining, which is quite good. Now, after all, is it not foolish to throw away this dress? Couldn't some of your friends manage to make use of it? Your servant who is just about your height can wear it very easily and will thus effect an economy in her expenses. Don't throw away the dress! Give it to your servant. You will give her pleasure. She will be grateful, and will remember always what you did for her. Isn't this much more practical than your original impulse to throw the dress into the rag-bag for the benefit of the

rag-man who won't thank you for it in the least?

And, since we are speaking of small household matters, take another case.

Before meals, you are accustomed to cut the bread into slices. This is a bad habit. It is a much better plan to cut the bread when you want it. To waste bread is a bad practise which opens the way for many others. But since this happens to be a habit of yours, what do you do with the pieces of bread that are not eaten at meals?

You throw them away. But that is extravagant! Keep them! Give them to your grocer who has chickens and rabbits to raise, or tell your servant to sell them. In one way or the other you will gain a little by so doing. You will secure the good-will of your grocer who will not mind giving you the best of a bargain once in a while, or the gratitude of your servant who will thus make a few pennies. You smile. You exclaim, "What ridiculous trifles!" By no means. It is just such trifles from which you learn the lesson of practical common sense. The sands of the sea are formed of an infinity of tiny grains of rock and pebble. All your little daily tasks, if executed faithfully, will make of you a person with the practical sense.

You go out for a walk. You are drest very stylishly in a gown rather easily soiled, which has cost you a good deal and which you value accordingly. Suddenly the sky becomes overcast, and in a moment or two some big drops of rain begin to fall.

What is to be done?

You stand in the shelter of a doorway and debate the question. Shall you wait for it to clear? You daren't budge from your shelter without running the risk of ruining your beautiful gown for ever. If there is any hope in the sky, if a spot or two of blue shows here and there, it will be wise to wait for the end of the shower, but be careful to keep well under cover in the meanwhile, and just as soon as you have the chance to quit your shelter look for a car that will take you home.

If the sky looks thoroughly stormy and threatening, don't hesitate a minute. Hail a cab and get into it. This little unforeseen expense will save you from a much greater loss and from a great annoyance.

It is a good plan to amuse yourself by figuring out what other people might do with something you are about to throw away. This will be a very profitable exercise which will teach

you the practical value to be found in every single thing.

I once knew a woman who carefully collected every piece of tinfoil she could find on candy or other small articles, as well as the tinfoil caps of bottles, and had these melted and run into molds, which she carved in an artistic manner. She thus avoided a small expense, that of purchasing foil for this particular kind of work.

These little exercises of economy and foresight are useful. I do not say to you, however, that you should collect all sorts of useless and discarded things that will become a burden to you, but accustom yourself to some such work which will be continuous and regular, with an eye to its practical value. Let every detail of your life become, when you fix your thought upon it, a pretext for self-analysis and a means for obtaining experience. You will finally be astonished by the facility with which you will be able to foresee the result of any event, you will be happy indeed to discover how very clearly you will learn to foresee things in this way.

Perhaps you may have heard of this incident in the life of the banker and statesman Jacques Laffitte. It happened in this way:

Jacques Laffitte, the son of a poor carpenter of Bayonne, went to Paris when he was twenty-one years old to seek for a position. For nine years he had been a clerk in a lawyer's office in his native place. He took up his quarters in the great city and, tho seeking everywhere, was able to find only ill-paid and temporary employment.

In very low spirits, pale, but spotlessly neat, he presented himself one morning at the office of a rich Swiss banker named Perregaux. But he was very soon told that there was nothing for him, even tho his open and intelligent face had made quite an appeal to the banker. There was no position vacant, and Laffitte, in great despondency, went out of the place.

As he crossed the banker's courtyard Laffitte suddenly stooped and picked up something. The man of money happened to be looking idly out of the window at the moment. He saw the action of the young man he had just dismissed, and, either because he was interested or because he was actuated by some other obscure reason, he rang for an attendant whom he told to go out after Jacques Laffitte and bring him back to his office.

Laffitte returned.

"What did you pick up in the courtyard, my boy?" asked the banker.

With a smile Laffitte carefully detached from the lapel of his coat a bright new pin and handed it in silence to the wealthy banker.

"You can stay here," said the latter. "There is a post here for you after all. I have just thought of something you can do."

And Perregaux employed him then and there as a bookkeeper at a salary of twelve hundred francs a year. He ended by giving him his entire confidence, made him his cashier, took him ultimately into partnership, and left him the banking business when he died.

Laffitte became a very wealthy man. Was made general manager, and finally president of the Bank of France. He was elected to the senate, and rendered to his country immense financial services.

And all this, thanks to what? To that one little act of picking up a pin. This simple and trifling little incident had done much for Laffitte in the eyes of the rich banker. It was for him a recommendation far more certain and more trustworthy than the best of written references.

It proved that the man who was leaving cast

down, refused, and without a position, and who, perceiving a pin upon the ground, had the thrift to pick it up and to place it securely in his coat, was a born economist, a person of foresight, a man of practical sense.

Monsieur Perregaux, who had a wide experience of business, of life, and of men, saw at a glance by witnessing this unconscious little action, exactly the type of man that Laffitte was.

The result proved that he had made no mistake in his judgment and that this mechanical act of his employee was the outcome of an instinctive habit of a mind that had been trained to foresight and had been taught to appreciate the value of little things.

This story will be of assistance to you in showing you the utility of the little practical exercises this book has suggested for you, as to the small details of your every-day life.

Little streams combine to make great rivers. Pennies added to pennies make a fortune. Attention added to attention, thought following upon thought, are the basis of intelligence, of judgment, of experience. It is these trifling habits which are the parents of important decisions.

CONCLUSION

MAN is the most helpless of all creatures. He lives in the company of imperious needs. He is a mere bundle of desires and regrets. Every day that passes increases his miseries. Dangers are about him constantly on every side. To escape these, to acquire, in the midst of so many reverses and disappointments, a little time for rest and for satisfaction, it is more than needful that every intelligent faculty he possesses should be on the alert. He must make his way slowly and with a prudent step, throwing scrutinizing glances about him to right and left. He is like a pioneer, crossing a primeval wilderness. He must clear a path as he goes forward, and he must light it and mark it that he can find it again. It is only by endurance and by sagacity that such a man can escape from the thousand dangers that threaten to engulf him.

Misery, suffering, and need are the spurs of life. They are in no sense evils to deplore, because they make us more adroit and more fit to battle.

The practical sense is the totality of the rules, of the combinations, devised to banish suffering, to drive away grief. All living beings are kept on the alert by this continually recurring need for making life more bearable. All their efforts are directed toward lightening the burdens of life. It is a species of defensive instinct which has enlisted man to work for his own improvement and for the improvement of everything with which he comes in contact.

The practical sense is the source of all progress, of every step forward toward the unknown, of all light, of all beauty, of all activity.

All of life is composed of sorrow and of our struggles to achieve the promised land where we can obtain one thing—happiness.

The practical sense is the genial ferryman who will row you over to that fortunate shore. Without it your life will be no more than a long sleep peopled with evil dreams, and you will go on until you die without once opening your eyes. Wake, then! Take stock of your own existence and of that of others. Study life and the past. Envisage the future. Utilize to the full every one of the gifts with which nature endowed you at birth. Let every quality and every defect even serve its turn in helping you

to force your way into this promised land, to make for yourself a place in this kingdom where none but the most daring and the most adroit hold sway, and where trickery and fraud are often crowned more readily than honest work.

Life promises a great deal, but performs nothing. It is a bad debtor and you must force its hand.

Remember always that the one great means of achieving the conquest of the practical sense is to acquire it and to apply it. Experience and will-power, these are the two qualities you must have.

Experience that may counsel you, and will-power to be your guide and your support. Let your rule of conduct be based on these four words which tell their tale of so many efforts and of so many victories:

"Knowledge; vision; will; success."